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## QUOTE OF NOTE:

"We can't undo the past but the future is ours to shape." —*Rabbi Stephen Fuchs*

**See story page 37**

## ON THE COVER

Jeffrey S. Bravin, executive director of the American School For The Deaf, visits an elementary level classroom where he checks in to see what students Milania, Sulanie and Xavier are working on.

Photo by Lisa Brisson  
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# All his world's a stage

Rob Ruggiero sets the scene at TheaterWorks

by Lynn Woike  
Editor

**Engaging.  
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These are among the adjectives that shape TheaterWorks as displayed on the wall behind Rob Ruggiero's desk.

"I play with words, have little mantras," he said.

A West Hartford resident since 2010, Ruggiero has been affiliated with TheaterWorks for 24 years, becoming the producing artistic director in January 2013.

Two things differentiate him from most others in similar positions: he does both plays and musicals, and he has an active freelance career.

He's directed "High" with Kathleen Turner and "Looped" with Valerie Harper in a Tony nominated performance on Broadway, and Off-Broadway he conceived, "Make Me a Song: The Music of William Finn" as well as "All Under Heaven," again with his friend Harper. This fall he'll be directing his 10th show at the Goodspeed. He's also directed at the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Pittsburgh Public Theater, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park and The St. Louis Municipal Opera Theatre – the country's oldest and largest outdoor musical theater. Two years ago, he did a large musical in Athens, Greece.

Yet, he always comes home to Hartford and the 191 seats in the basement on Pearl Street where

in 1993 he began his professional career.

Ruggiero had met Steve Campo the previous fall.

"He handed me two scripts and he said, 'Let me know which one interests you.' It was 'Imaging Brad' – and that's what I chose – and 'Riches,' but now it's called, 'War of the Roses,' based on the movie."

It opened in a major snowstorm, stranding the cast at a hotel, eating vending machine food.

Since then, Ruggiero has done more than 50 shows at TheaterWorks.

He calls them all his children, and while he loves them all, some can't help but be singled out as special. He developed the musical "Ella – Off the Record," about Ella Fitzgerald, which had its world premiere at TheaterWorks in 2005. It then traveled to more than 30 theaters around the country, earning him "a lot of national exposure" before returning to Hartford as "Ella," this time at Hartford Stage, where it was held over an additional week in 2008.

He also conceived the musical, "Make Me a Song: the Music of Bill Finn," which began here and went Off Broadway.

Another notable production was the 1997 play "The Dragon and the Pearl: The Life of Pearl S. Buck," starring Valerie Harper portraying more than a dozen characters and beginning a friendship with Ruggiero that continues today. "The Dragon" made it Off Broadway.

As a child of 8 or 9, Ruggiero remembers writing scripts and gathering up his cousins at the lake house to rehearse them, dress them in costume and put on "little shows."

In high school in Mildord, Massachusetts and during his undergraduate years at Stonehill College, "I had that connection happen with theater," he said. "It really wasn't until the end of my undergraduate career that I took a directing class. I was a junior or a senior, 19 or 20, and for the longest time, I was trying to figure out what to do."

"I was an actor, but I knew I wasn't a great actor. I could paint and draw, but I'm not really good [enough] to be an artist.' I could play music and read music, but I knew I'd never be a musician. I danced, but I wasn't a great dancer. So I felt a little like a jack-of-all-trades, master of none, and then when I took a directing class, I remembered that all of a sudden, all of that knowledge and all those kind of skills, resources, could come in, and I was like, 'This is what I was meant to do.' It was so clear."

Because "you can't make a living at this," after graduating, he played it safe. With an entrepreneurial spirit, he ran a framing business,

worked as a director at a nursing home, owned a little art gallery and, when he couldn't find something to satisfy his theatrical hunger, he began his own non-professional theater company called New Directions. Years went by before he decided directing "was really more important than anything, than my business. It's what gave me the most passion and excitement, and so I applied for grad school."

He sold his business and his car, knowing at the time, "If I don't try this, I'm going to spend my whole life wondering."

His theater experience was with musicals, so in graduate school, he said, "I made a distinct choice to study non-musical theater because I wanted to make sure that I had those tools and that craft solidly in my pocket."

He got a master's in directing from Rutgers University. (He later received an honorary doctorate from Stonehill.) "Once I went to grad school, I just kind of launched myself in the professional world," he said.

Ruggiero, 30, was teaching at Rutgers and working at a theater in Cleveland when the head of the acting

program introduced him to Campo in 1992.

Since that meeting, Ruggiero has played a role in the theater's growth, taking it from a small theater with wooden risers and a staff of three to a 191-seat theater with 5,000 subscribers and a staff of 18.

"I became the associate artistic director relatively quickly," he said.

When his freelance-career took off, he said, "I became much less day-to-day" but always stayed connected, always came back to do a show. When Campo announced his retirement, the board asked Ruggiero to return and fill the position as an interim.

"Once you have the keys to the car ...," he said, his voice trailing off. "I started getting really motivated.... Besides my own little theater before I went to grad school, this was the first time as a professional director that I basically was able to run an organization."

Since then, TheaterWorks has continued to grow.

**"So when I do a musical, I approach it like a play. I'm a behaviorist, I guess. I focus on relationships and character..."**

**-Rob Ruggiero**

Photo by Lanny Nagler

Hartford. The first thing that impressed me was the incredible dedication Rob and his entire team have for not only their beloved theater but for the entire community.... Attending a performance at TheaterWorks is like being in your living room with a group of friends; the warmth and care that is put into every work is one of passion and dedication that comes from a leader who



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## Reviews

"Rob Ruggiero's direction is solid, bringing out the emotion and conflict of the script, and the staging works very well as the action unfolds in Einstein's study. The intimate setting of the TheaterWorks space works extremely well for this piece, bringing the audience right into the middle of all the action." —*Joseph Harrison for BWW Review ("Relativity," 2016)*

"With a magnificent company of perfectly cast actors, brilliant direction by TheaterWorks' producing artistic director, Rob Ruggiero, and a characteristically first-rate design team, this production is emblematic of how and why TheaterWorks has become such an enduring and invaluable Hartford institution." —*Sylviane Gold for The New York Times ("Third," 2015)*

"Rob Ruggiero's direction is marvelously realized. His work with this material is simply superlative, and the entire cast does terrific work under his guidance." —*Chris Gibson for BWW Review ("Follies," 2016)*

"Although he is based in Connecticut, Ruggiero has turned into one of St. Louis' favorite directors." —*Judith Newmark for St. Louis Post-Dispatch ("The Other Place," 2014)*

understands what it takes to make a performance successful. Rob Ruggiero, is one of the great treasures of this community and the theater world."

He moves easily between musicals and plays.

"I built this reputation now as being somebody who brings a sensibility to both plays and musicals because I do both. So when I do a musical, I approach it like a play. I'm a behaviorist, I guess. I focus on relationships and character and ... I look

at why are they singing.

Something's alive inside of them because the expression of words is not enough. But to me, a musical is a musical play, a play with music," even though, stylistically, they are different.

Through April 30 at TheaterWorks, he's directing "Next to Normal." The big musical is the theater's largest production, with six actors – compared to the more normal one or two, sometimes three, maybe four. There's also a six-piece orchestra off stage in a corner.

Describing the scope, Ruggiero said, "It's like doing three plays at the

same time when considering the resources and the costs."

His passion for the show, and his ability to show the story "through a more intimate lens," more than offsets the pressure and the expectations as Tony Award nominee Christiane Noll plays Diana in this musical that won three Tony Awards, including Best Score, and the Pulitzer Prize for drama. It promises to be engaging and personal.

He is also developing a project for TheaterWorks he and two others conceived – a musical about Peter, Paul and Mary.

"I'm always doing multiple jobs. I spend a lot of hours going back and forth to New York," he said. Describing himself as something of a working parent, he praised his staff, saying, "The staff knows how to function whether dad's home or dad's away." He's also grateful his board supports his freelancing.

That includes a reworking of the 1980s musical "Rags" for the Goodspeed that runs this coming October to December.

"There will be a lot of original material along with a significant

portion of new material," he said.

"I juggle things," he said, admitting to being a workaholic.

"I'm here because as a theater artist and as a director, you want to be somewhere where you feel like your vision and your art touches people." The audiences, he added, are "so kind and so responsive."

"There's no question that TheaterWorks ... is my artistic home and I continue to feel inspired and motivated and challenged here."

The other theaters have become his vacation homes.

"This is where I cut my teeth, but I have an opportunity here to start new work. ... Great stories inspire me. And when I look for repertoire, I look for the things that are relevant, and current and versatile and engaging and challenging. Basically I feel like we have an obligation to nurture new voices when we can, but also bring ... exposure to all kinds of worlds and all kinds of stories because when we look at the human condition, we look at those stories, we inevitably look at our own lives and say, 'Huh.' And if you're enlightened or challenged or questioning something, then we've done our jobs." **WHL**

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# Weathering a fiscal storm

Town officials grapple with potential state budget impact in crafting local numbers

by Abigail Albair  
Executive Editor

**M**embers of the public have come out in large numbers to share feedback on the town's proposed budget as Town Council and Board of Education officials grapple with a state budget plan that would drastically impact many municipalities.

In what he called "the most difficult budget we've had in decades," Town Manager Ron Van Winkle proposed a net 10.3 percent property tax increase for fiscal year 2018 during a council meeting last month.

Director of Financial Services Peter Privitera broke down the budget proposal – which totals \$287.3 million with an overall budget impact of \$25.4 million in new revenue needed.

The proposed new mill rate for real and personal property is 42.76 mills, an increase of 3.25 mills from the current rate. The state has capped the motor vehicle tax at 32 mills, a decrease from the mill rate of 37 for vehicles adopted in last year's budget.

The proposal includes a property tax increase of 11.1 percent, but because of grand list growth – \$47.1 million of which was new construction generating an additional \$1.86 million in tax revenue – the net property tax increase needed to balance the budget is \$23.537 million, or a 10.3 percent increase.

"It's not a budget I wanted to bring to you tonight," Van Winkle said in early March. "We had expectations of bringing you a more

modest budget."

If the changes to state funding and the teacher pension payment contained in the governor's budget were not looming, the mill rate proposal would be 40.48 mills, an increase of only .97 mills.

The total proposed town budget equates to \$166.2 million in spending for education – for 58 percent of the overall budget – \$103.7 million in spending on the town side accounting for 36 percent of the total, and \$17.4 million in capital spending making up the final 6 percent.

Expenditures will increase by \$19 million, or 7.1 percent. Non-taxable revenue will decrease by \$6.4 million, or 16.4 percent, which combined accounts for the more than \$25 million budget impact.

The expenditure increase is comprised of \$12.9 million for education costs, \$4.8 million on the town side and \$1.3 million in capital spending. Those numbers equate to increases of 8.4 percent, 4.8 percent and 8.1 percent, respectively, over spending in the prior year.

"This budget ... on the town side and undoubtedly on the board side, is referred to as a current services budget," Privitera said. "There is no new programming, no new positions. Everything in the budget is legally mandated, contractually required, or necessary for the employees to do their jobs."

Of the proposed increase to the cost of education, \$5.8 million is caused by the governor's budget, which shifts a portion of the teacher

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pension payment to municipalities and eliminates the excess cost reimbursement to the school district.

Overall, the town would lose \$8.69 million in Education Cost Sharing from the governor's adopted 2017 budget and \$3.9 million in excess cost reimbursement, in addition to the new \$8 million expense for the pension payment. The town would gain \$6.14 million in a new special education grant, for a net loss of \$14.5 million in state funding.

On the town side, the major drivers of the increase include \$652,000 for wages and salaries, \$765,000 in pension contributions, \$105,000 for the town health program, \$209,000 for workers compensation and a \$284,000 contingency amount for police department salaries. That contract is currently being negotiated.

Both active and retiree health costs are projecting a savings this year, which will be amortized over a five-year period allowing for the minimal increase this year, Privitera said.

The town must also pay the MDC ad valorem tax – which will increase \$618,000 this year – and a reserve of \$1.78 million to be used if the city of Hartford defaults on its MDC payments.

That reserve payment was not included in the tax calculation, Privitera said.

According to Privitera, the average homeowner of a single-family home assessed at \$224,000 will see an increase of \$728 in taxes on their

property. Because of the state cap on the motor vehicle tax rate at 32 mills, the average person will see a decrease of \$45 in car tax for each of two vehicles assessed at \$9,000, for a total tax increase of \$638. The total tax levied on the average homeowner would be \$10,154.

Without the change in state funding and the teacher pension shift, the average homeowner would only see an increase of \$218 on their \$224,000 valued home if no change

decrease the tax increase, public hearings have attracted hundreds of taxpayers to express their views, predominantly with regard to proposed education cuts.

Among the options for reductions are the closing of one fire station, which would save \$25,000; a reduction of police overtime related to non-core programs, which would save \$250,000; the elimination of town trash pickup as of Oct. 1 in favor of the sale of barrels, which

and the tax overpayments balance to offset general fund expenditures for just over \$3 million.

Reductions outlined for board consideration initially included increasing class sizes, reducing supports for schools yielding fewer special education teachers, ESOL teachers, reading teachers and guidance counselors, reducing program offerings like QUEST at the elementary and middle school levels, returning to half-day kindergarten at six elementary schools and eliminating the Unified Arts offerings at the middle school and world languages at the elementary schools, among other things.

During a joint hearing before the board and council Thursday, March 23 at Charter Oak International Academy, Board Vice Chair Cheryl Greenberg assured the crowd that raising elementary class sizes, cutting world languages in elementary schools, cutting full-day kindergarten, cutting early intervention reading specialists or high school reading teachers, cutting elementary and middle school QUEST and cutting librarians are all no longer under consideration.

Despite that promise, in particular many students still spoke about QuEST at the hearing to reiterate their support for the program.

Other speakers focused on the Unified Arts program, the Alternative Search for Knowledge program at Hall High School and class sizes while a few spoke against potential town cuts, such as closing

## "If cuts must be made, please do it with a scalpel, not a cleaver."

-Ted Goerner

to the assessment was made in revaluation, for a total impact of \$128 when the car tax savings was applied. The total tax levied would be \$9,644.

Commercial property owners saw property values increase dramatically in revaluation and will therefore see significant tax hikes of 29.9 percent. Even without state budget changes, the tax increase would be 22.9 percent.

### Public reaction

As the budget moves through a series of Town Council committee meetings and Board of Education workshops where a variety of possible cuts and changes are examined as ways to reduce spending and

would save \$3.255 million and generate \$1 million in revenue; the implementation of a pay-as-you-throw trash system, which would save \$400,000 and generate revenue yet to be determined; the closing of the Bishops Corner library branch, which would save \$220,000 and closing the West Hartford senior center to save \$120,000.

Pursuing direct sewer billing with the MDC, effective Jan. 1, 2018, would save \$4.665 million.

New revenue generation options that are possible include eliminating parking validation at the Noah Webster Library for \$130,000, modifying on-street parking rates to include Sundays for \$150,000, selling town-owned land for \$600,000, and using surplus funds, CNRE funds

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the Bishops Corner branch of the library and eliminating parking validation at the Noah Webster Library.

Still others urged town officials not to react too quickly to the governor's budget, which the town's legislative delegation has pledged to vote against and many have called "dead on arrival."

"Do not act out of a sense of panic or a sense of desperation," said Ted Goerner, president of the West Hartford Education Association. "We have endured and faced fiscal crisis in this state before. ... We've had state deficits double, triple what we have now. ... Malloy's budget is dead on arrival. It's not going to happen. It's not going to be easy, but I do believe that things are not going to be nearly as grim as we think they are at this point in time."

He added, "If cuts must be made, please do it with a scalpel, not a cleaver."

Although many at the March 23 meeting supported the proposed budget in order to avoid further cuts, a few spoke against tax increases.

One man accused the officials of

"scaring people" with suggested cuts to programs, and questioned increases to salaries, pension and medical benefits.

"Teachers and arts are all vital, but we can't raise taxes," he said. "We need to learn to live within our means. ... We need to hold your feet to the fire to make tough decisions."

To read the full story on the meeting, see the March 30 edition of The West Hartford Press.

The town's legislative delegation held a forum earlier in the month to hear suggestions from the public about how to address the state's fiscal crisis in a way that mitigates the impact municipalities are facing under the governor's plan.

State Reps. Joe Verrengia, Andy Fleischmann and Derek Slap, along with state Sen. Beth Bye, gathered before more than 200 residents – more than 30 of whom spoke.

The state budget is now in the appropriations subcommittee at the beginning of a long process that will hopefully yield an appropriations proposal at the end of April, followed by negotiations between the gover-

nor and the legislature and, ultimately, a final plan.

"The priority is to stand up for West Hartford and say this budget is unacceptable," Bye said of the governor's proposal. "We are a community that relies on our schools and our high quality of life. ... That is challenged by this governor's budget and so we are here to listen to you. Maybe you have ideas, particular concerns. We're really here to listen to you."

She said the proposed cuts to state aid are "effectively a tax increase" that go against years spent working on policies to reduce property taxes.

"This is a 180 by the governor and we are in complete disagreement with him," Bye said, as she and her colleagues all committed to vote against the current proposal.

The feedback from the public was much the same as the meeting later in the month.

"People in the middle, we're struggling," one speaker said. "How do I do that as a parent of two children, how do I balance that? This is real. West Hartford is very diverse

and I am not alone. There are many people, good people who are trying to make ends meat. They're educated, but not super rich. ... They're trying to give their children the best they can offer."

In the end, the legislators urged the public to keep pressure on the governor's office.

"There are some themes that I heard across virtually all comments that are clearly resonant in this town. They reflect the values that we share and they are themes that I think make sense for you to put in emails and phone calls to the governor's office," Fleischmann said. **WHL**

*As of press time, the Town Council had two more public hearings scheduled: one for Monday, March 27 and one for Wednesday, April 5 at 2 p.m. For coverage of the March 27 hearing, see the March 30 edition of The West Hartford Press. The Board of Education was scheduled to hear from the public a final time on Wednesday, March 29 and to adopt its budget April 4 at 7 p.m. The Town Council will adopt the final budget April 25 at 7 p.m.*

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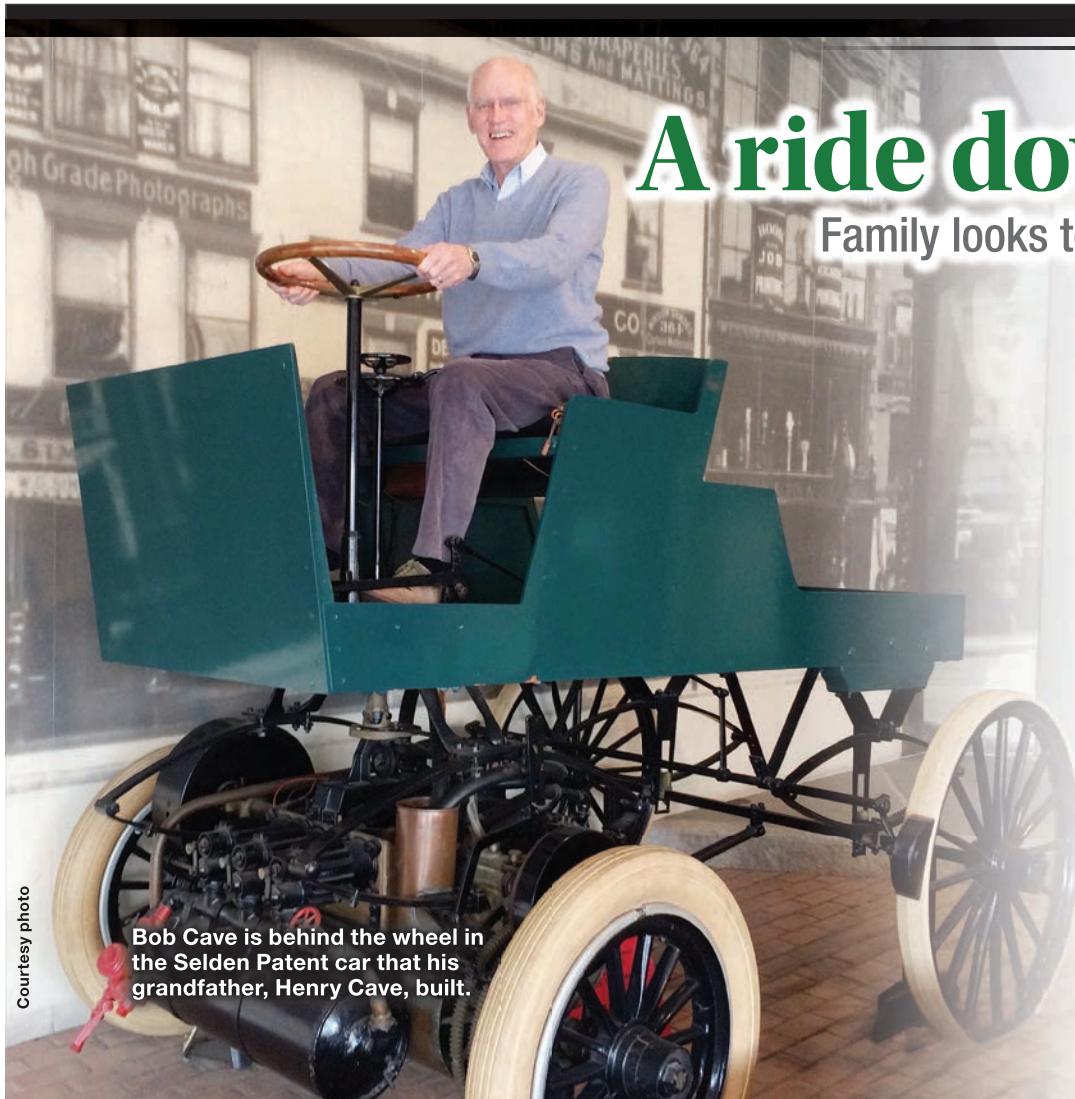
  
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# A ride down memory lane

## Family looks to display one of the first automated vehicles

by Alicia B. Smith  
Associate Editor

**A** visit to their grandfather's home in Hartford was an adventure for Bob and Dick Cave. The brothers reveled in picking through the shelves and drawers of their grandfather's home. There was no telling what they would find.

Bob Cave remembers the many models his grandfather had built.

Dick Cave referred to the home as a "variable museum."

"Walking through the house, for a kid, it was so much fun for us looking at all this stuff," Bob Cave said.

Their grandfather was also the first in the neighborhood to get a television, another reason to visit.

Bob Cave recalled the television set was as large as a table and had horrible reception.

Their grandfather was the type of person who liked to build and tinker. He would go on to earn 100 patents covering a range of interests. Among them was a patent for an automated dishwasher – a contraption Henry Cave would build and his wife, Jeanette, would go on to wonder why anyone would want such a machine.

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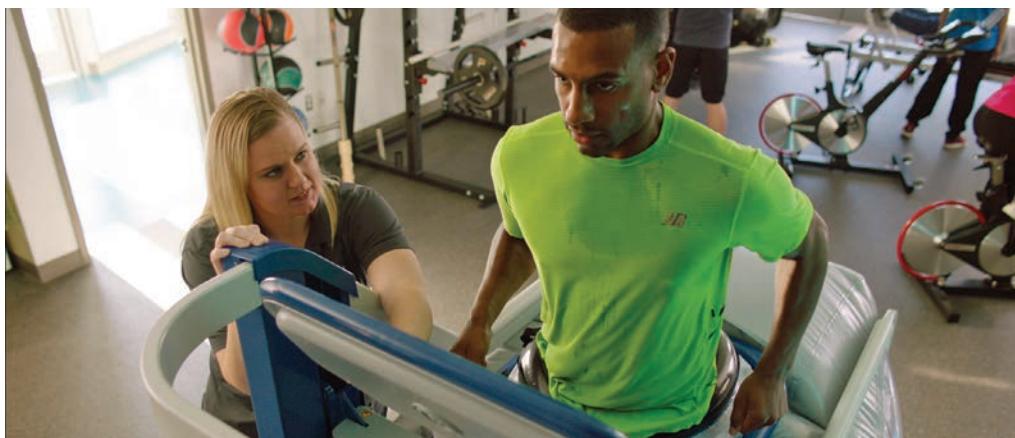
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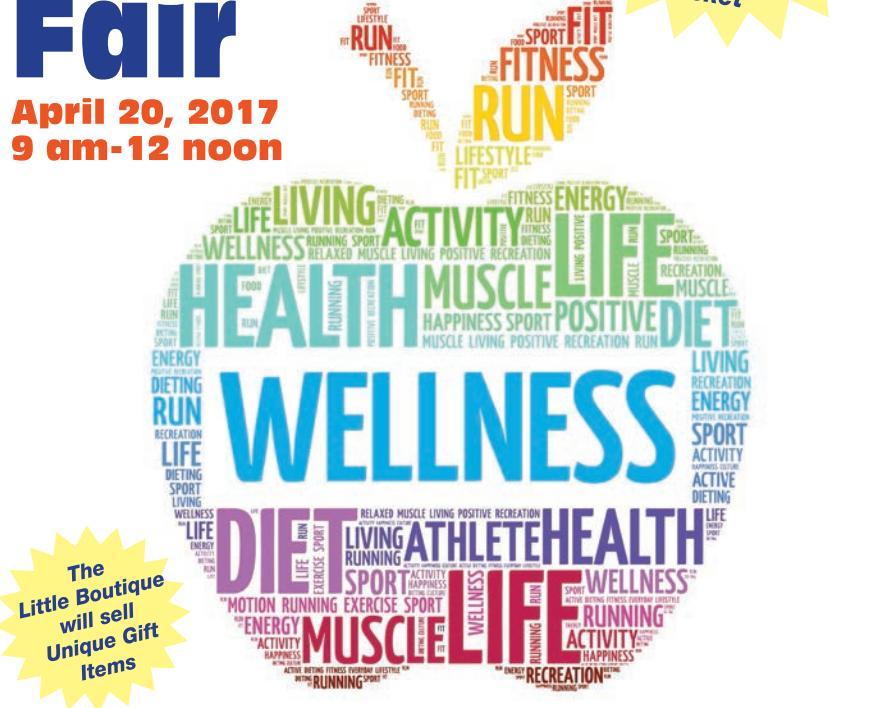


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Of all the papers, models and automated do-dads that Bob and Dick Cave found at their grandfather's home, one recently caught their attention: the vehicle he built in 1909, based on the Selden patent and consisting of a number of components for an automated vehicle.

That patent filed by George Selden in 1879 is considered to be the start of the automobile industry in this country, the brothers said. In 1909, years after the patent had been approved, their grandfather was asked to build the vehicle to prove it would run.

That very simple automobile now resides at 450 Capital Avenue, a building that currently houses the Department of Administrative Services for the State of Connecticut. It is locked away and not often seen by the public. Bob and Dick Cave are working to see if they can have the Selden car, as it is called, relocated so the public can view it.

In addition to honoring the work of their grandfather, the two West Hartford residents are also looking to bring attention to the role Connecticut had in the early automobile industry. Their research is featured in a PowerPoint presentation they have shared recently with several community groups.

Among their findings is that the American auto industry began in Springfield, Massachusetts, when, in 1893, Frank Duryea built the first gasoline-powered automobile. It was not long before the auto industry moved south to Hartford where Pope Manufacturing, known at that time for their Columbia Bicycles, began to manufacture electric vehicles. By 1899, the company was producing more than 500 cars a year and by 1903 would become the largest auto manufacturing company in the country.

According to his research, Bob Cave said that between 1897 and 1914 Hartford produced 20,000 vehicles.

In addition to Pope Manufacturing, Pope Hartford, Kelsey Motorette, National Machine Company and Columbia all produced vehicles. Also building them were Corbin in New Britain, Locomobile in Trumbull, Compound and Fisbe in Middletown, and Cameron and Milburn in New London. There were more than

200 companies throughout the state that manufactured automotive components.

Connecticut would go on to pass the nation's first automobile laws in 1901, which limited the maximum speed for an automobile to 15 mph and stated that all vehicles must stop for a frightened horse on the road.

The state also has the distinction of being the place where the president of the United States rode in an automobile for the first time. Teddy Roosevelt holds that distinction when he rode in an electric vehicle in Hartford in 1902.

In 1900 the Association of Licensed Automobile Manufacturers was founded. Two years later Henry Ford applied to become a member and was turned down. Ford would go on to file a suit against the Selden patent, which stated that anyone who built an automobile must pay royalties. In 1909, Ford's General Motors lost the suit and had to pay \$1 million in back royalties. Ford filed a second suit in 1911, this time winning the case.

"His contention was that any automobile built according to the Selden patent would not run," David Corrigan, curator of the Museum of Connecticut History at the State Library said of the first suit filed by Ford.

Pope manufacturing, who at this time owned the patent, decided to build a Selden automobile to determine if it could run and Henry Cave was assigned the job.

"It was tested at a racetrack, the Guttenberg Racetrack," Corrigan said. "The first time failed, the next day it ran for two miles in 15 minutes," Corrigan said, adding that a photo of the vehicle's debut shows a man walking alongside the vehicle, possibly walking faster than vehicle itself.

"It's a great photo," Corrigan said.

Ford ultimately won the suit and the Selden vehicle was put in storage. It was found at the Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey in the 1960s and moved to Connecticut in 1968. The vehicle was restored to its original condition, a process that took four years, Corrigan said.

He explained that the Ford-Pope lawsuit was covered nationally.

"The car itself played a role

in the fledgling auto industry in this country," Corrigan said of the Selden's vehicle's importance to Connecticut.

Henry Cave was born in England. He would go on to work for a short time with Daimler Corporation and later would work for the Fuller Brush Company for 33 years as the chief engineer, and established an Automobile School at what was Hilliard College and is now the University of Hartford.

Quotes attributed to Henry Cave state, "Hartford, Connecticut does not claim to have made the first automobile, but can claim to have started the auto industry," and, "I hope future generations, in the area, will not lose sight of those days when their city [Hartford] was the Automobile Manufacturing Center of the World."

"Its significance to the automobile industry is unmatched," states a brochure from the Connecticut State Library, written by Walter Brahm.

"We got to know him as a white-haired senior citizen," Dick Cave said of his grandfather, adding that he lived with his grandparents for a

short time and worked one summer at the Fuller Brush Company.

The grandsons followed in Henry Cave's footsteps in their own way. Bob Cave went on to build and refurbish houses after earning a degree in engineering. Dick Cave became a mathematician.

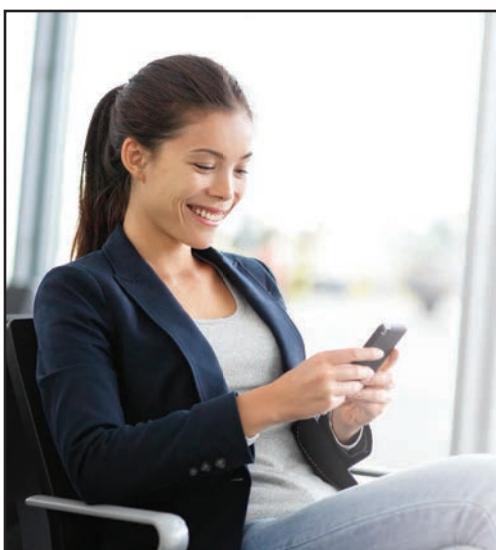
When Detroit grew to become the auto industry hub in this country, Henry Cave sent much of the materials he had on the automobile manufacturing that had taken place in Hartford to the Detroit Friedman Museum.

"The main thing is there is a lot of manufacturing going on in the Connecticut area," Dick Cave said. "One thing Connecticut has never gotten credit for, the scope. It's a shame to see that be lost."

The brothers are interested in making younger generations aware of the Selden vehicle and Hartford's involvement in the auto industry. The two are working with the state historical society, which is currently in possession of the Selden Patent vehicle Henry Cave built, to find a location to display it. **WHL**



Photo by Alicia B. Smith



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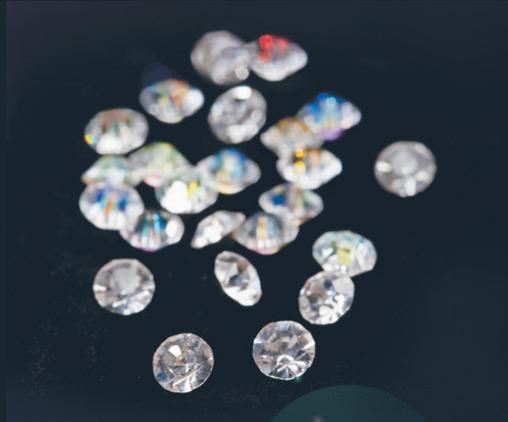
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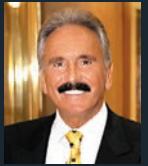
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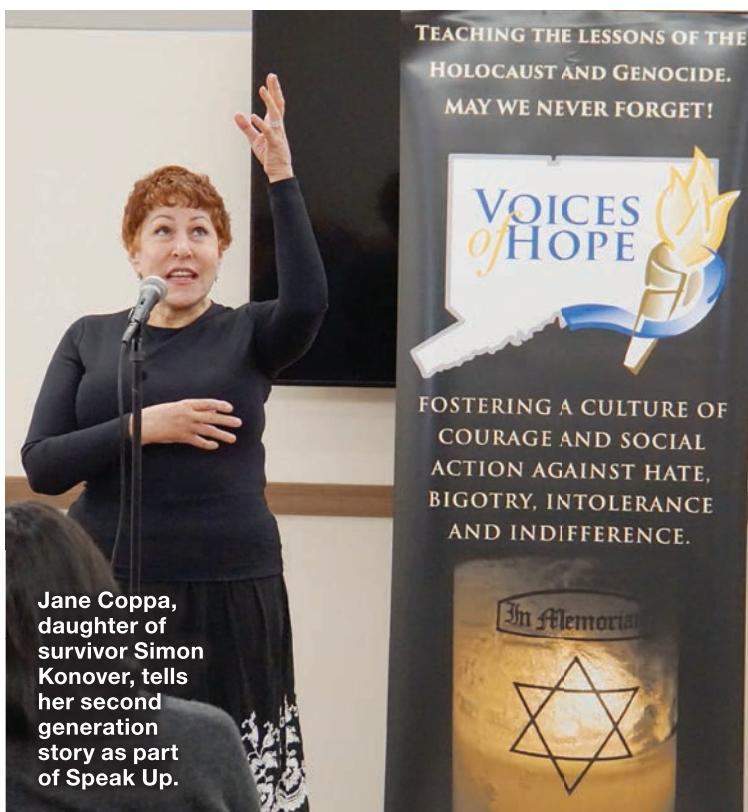


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# Voices of Hope

Families of Holocaust survivors form Farmington-based nonprofit

by Lynn Woike  
Editor

**T**o commemorate Holocaust Remembrance Day April 24, Voices of Hope will sponsor the third annual community event at which the names of those who perished during the Shoah will be read. The day marks the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Called Yom Hashoah, it is celebrated in the 27th day of Nisan in the Hebrew calendar.

While it's the third year the event will occur – begun by Jessica Samuels, the grandchild of a survivor – it's the first year Voices of Hope is hosting it as an independent corporation. As of January, it left the umbrella of the Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut to become an educational nonprofit with an office in Farmington.

Alan Lazowski – a West Hartford resident and the son of Holocaust survivors Rabbi Philip and Ruth Lazowski – founded Voices of Hope in 2008 as a way for second- and third-generation descendants to share their families' stories.

Robinson and Cole provided pro bono assistance with the process, and the program's now awaiting final approval as an independent nonprofit corporation.

"Our mission has remained the same, to foster a culture of courage and social action against hate, bigotry, intolerance and indifference. We meet this mission by commemorating, celebrating and educating our

10 years ago Alan Lazowski reached out to me. My mother is a survivor and her parents and her father's parents are also survivors. My sister has written a book that will be published, coming out in April, talking about the amazing survival of the three generations of my family. I always knew that I was very lucky."

He became the chairman while Voices was still with the Jewish

– "teaching about genocide and hate and bullying, which are part of why the Holocaust occurred."

Kathy Fishman praised the board of directors for its dedication to the mission and the direction it provides. In addition to Peter Fishman are Chairman Alan Lazowski, Vice President Alan Berkowitz, secretary Sharone Kornman, treasurer Jessica Samuels and 13 others representing 120 active members.

"We thank the Zachs family for their dedication to everything Jewish and providing Voices of Hope with a roof within the JFACT organization all these years," Kathy Fishman said.

She expects to collaborate with JFACT on future programs.

"As an educational nonprofit, we continue to bring survivors and their descendants into schools to teach the lessons of the Shoah through personal testimonies and video screenings in classrooms, lecture halls and boardrooms. We do this with the goal of raising social consciousness by connecting people to the humanity of holocaust and genocide victims," Huttner said.

**"If we erase memories of events like the Holocaust, then it will be difficult to empathize with people today whose identity makes them vulnerable."**

**-Liz Devine**

community so that we never forget," said Anna Huttner, who, along with Kathy Fishman, serves as director.

Peter Fishman (who is no relation to Kathy Fishman) is the organization's president and has donated office space at 20 Waterside Drive in Farmington.

"Before Voices of Hope was called Voices of Hope, I was involved," he said. "It was about

Federation.

"Last September, it became apparent that we needed to become an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit because we could not get grants from some certain institutions because we were affiliated with a religious organization," Peter Fishman said, noting that while there's a strong Jewish component, the organization is about education

**Anna Huttner  
and Kathy  
Fishman share  
director duties.**



For the past several years, Voices brought students to the Museum of Jewish Heritage, A living Memorial to the Holocaust in New York City. This year, plans call for bringing more than 150 from Hartford's two high schools. Students spend the day touring the museum with a docent, hearing from a survivor and learning about other genocides. A survivor or a second generation volunteer also accompanies students on the bus to answer questions and join in the conversation.

Students from other area schools will be brought to the University of Hartford's Museum of Jewish Civilization.

"This trip is easier for many schools, and the costs are less prohibitive," Huttner said.

A couple of trips have taken place already, with several more planned for this spring.

Voices is partnering with the university to train students and children of Holocaust survivors to become docents who will help lead the tours. Again, master teachers were tapped to develop curriculum materials to help teachers who have students traveling to the local museum.

Another Voices partnership, this one with the university and the Hartford Jewish Historical Society, launched the Holocaust

Survivor Interview Project. It aims to video record the stories of more than a dozen local survivors at the Jewish Historical Society.

Many of the stories are part of the Fortunoff and Spielberg archives, Kathy Fishman said, "but we felt it important to have a local database of the testimony of the Hartford survivors that can be accessed by the community."

Some are featured at the University of Hartford's Museum of Jewish Civilization.

On January 27, Voices co-sponsored the 7th Annual International Holocaust Remembrance Day program that drew nearly 300 attendees including survivors and their families, educators, political figures and students on the anniversary of the liberation from Auschwitz.

In February, it hosted its second Second Generation Speak Up showcase, featuring the stories from seven children of survivors.

"At Voices of Hope, we are so proud of these showcases, as it was one of our very first goals when Voices of Hope was originally created to work with the second generation on telling their stories so that the memories of their parents, those that endured the Holocaust, will live on forever," Kathy Fishman said.

The stories were created in workshops designed by teacher and



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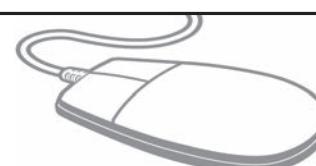
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## May happenings

### May 3

Voices of Hope's main fundraiser, Evening of Hope, will take place at The Emanuel Synagogue in West Hartford from 6-9 p.m. Dr. Deborah Dwork, professor of Holocaust History and founding director of the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies in the Department of History at Clark University, will be the keynote speaker. Her topic will be "Strangers in a Strange Land: Refugees Then and Now." At the event, three teachers will be awarded the Simon Konover Recognition for Excellence in Holocaust Teaching, and Voices of Hope President Peter Fishman and his wife, Lisa Fishman, will be honored for their years of dedication to the organization. For more information send an email info@ctvoicesofhope.org.

author Matt Dicks and his wife, Elysha, of SpeakUp.

Children of Holocaust survivors "have their own story that integrates their parent's story," Huttner said, noting the stories are not the same. Second generation members often talk about the first time they heard their parents' story, or coming to understand something, such as why they were forced to learn to play the violin – because back then, musicians were given more food and more privileges, she said.

In March, the organization sponsored one of the films in the Greater Hartford Jewish Film Festival, and showed the documentary, "Gisela's Legacy" at Simsbury High School followed by a panel discussion with Holocaust survivor Gisela Adamaski, her daughter, Eliane Sandler, and the producer's mother, Julie McNeill.

Voices is funded by private and foundation donations.

A grant from the Jewish Community Foundation allowed Voices to develop a Holocaust curriculum for the state Department of Education. It aligns with the state standards and provides tools to encourage educators

to teach the Holocaust in their classrooms. A link is being created on the department's site to a bibliography of resources for incorporating the Holocaust into both literature and history classes, along with webinars that are being filmed to assist teachers.

Among those working on the project are University of Hartford professor Avinoam Patt, and Liz Devine and Tracey Wilson – retired master teachers from West Hartford. The two had taught history and developed the human rights curriculum for Hall and Conard High schools.

"Tracey and I have worked together on Holocaust curriculum for the State of Connecticut. Using the state frameworks, we developed curriculum for 6/7 grade on refugees of the Holocaust, with particular focus on the Kindertransport; grade 9 is focused on Kristallnach and the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; and grade 11 and 12 is focused on upstanders including the villagers of LeChambou in France as well as the role of justice and accountability after World War II. Each unit includes compelling questions, primary resources – some

from the Hartford area – as well as suggestions for informed action," Devine said.

The two women also viewed the Hartford Remembers the Holocaust exhibit at UHart's museum and created a template for teachers to use when taking students.

Lessons were created around the museum exhibit, and an activity at the museum comparing refugees of the 1930s with Syrian refugees today. Schools also have the opportunity to visit with one of the survivors featured in the exhibit.

The partners hoped that students not only understand the Holocaust but also connect what they have learned from the past to events occurring today.

"Students are encouraged to apply what they have learned about the Holocaust and use communication, collaboration and research skills to take informed action," Devine said.

The packet suggests activities for today's Syrian refugee crisis.

"Some of the themes that are covered in our activities include identity, courage, human dignity, upstander

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behavior, alienation, persecution and survival," Devine said.

"If we erase memories of events like the Holocaust, then it will be difficult to empathize with people today whose identity makes them vulnerable. One way to gain perspective is for students to read the accounts of those who experienced the Holocaust. That is why they are here at this museum. They have the opportunity to find out about six people who experienced the Holocaust and by understanding their stories, they will have a better idea of the choices and lack of choices these Holocaust survivors had and how governments and individuals reacted to them," she said.

Voices' two directors volunteer monthly at Café Europa, helping serve lunch to more than 50 survivors at a program held at the Mandell JCC.

Voices' short-term goal is to expand its educational reach throughout the state, and to obtain more genocide and

holocaust grants. Voices also provides Holocaust-related books for schools that cannot afford them.

This fall, it will host the inaugural Connecticut Conference for Survivors and their Children and Grandchildren, offering opportunities to meet, deepen their understanding and learn together, the two directors said.

"We've been growing exponentially," Peter Fishman said, noting that attendance at events is growing, more money is being raised and more programming is occurring. Voices is forming new strategic partnerships.

"We want to be able to expand our programming in other parts of the state as well," he said, adding that the stories of survivors can be linked to current events. "Hate and bullying are not new and are not to be tolerated," he said. **WHL**

*For more information about Voices of Hope, to make a donation or to volunteer, send an email to [info@ctvoicesofhope.org](mailto:info@ctvoicesofhope.org).*

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## April happenings

### April 3

Heidi Fishman, sister to Voices President Peter Fishman, will launch her book, "Tutti's Promise," at a book signing and dessert reception at the Mandell Jewish Community Center from 7-9 p.m. The story is about her mother's courage and hope during the Holocaust. Reservations recommended; email [info@ctvoicesofhope.org](mailto:info@ctvoicesofhope.org).

### April 23

The Annual Yom Hashoah commemoration will be held at Beth El Temple, 2626 Albany Avenue, in West Hartford from 7-9 p.m. Gisela Adamski, who was born in Germany and sent to concentration camps at age 14, will be the guest speaker. Prior to the commemoration, from 6-7 p.m., the names of local victims and deceased survivors will be read. Community members are invited to submit names to be included. Survivors and their families may participate in the candle procession at the beginning of the commemoration. As part of the Fred and Regina Jacobs Holocaust Survivors Student Essay Project, students' essays will be published in the program. This event is sponsored by the Mandell JCC, JFACT and Voices of Hope.

### April 24

For a third year, 100,000 of the 200,000 names of those who perished during the Shoah will be read from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the Gallery at the Mandell JCC. The Mandell JCC and Voices of Hope are coordinating the event that was initiated by Jessica Samuels, the granddaughter of survivors. For more information or to read names, email [jmanchor@aol.com](mailto:jmanchor@aol.com) or call 860-470-5591.

### April 28

The 39th Annual Holocaust Commemoration – sponsored by Voices of Hope, JFACT and Jewish Federation of Western Connecticut – will be held at the State Capitol from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. A ceremony at 11:30 a.m. will be followed by lunch at 12:30 p.m. for Holocaust Survivors, program participants and elected officials. RSVP required for lunch to [aeweber@jfact.org](mailto:aeweber@jfact.org) or 860-727-5771.

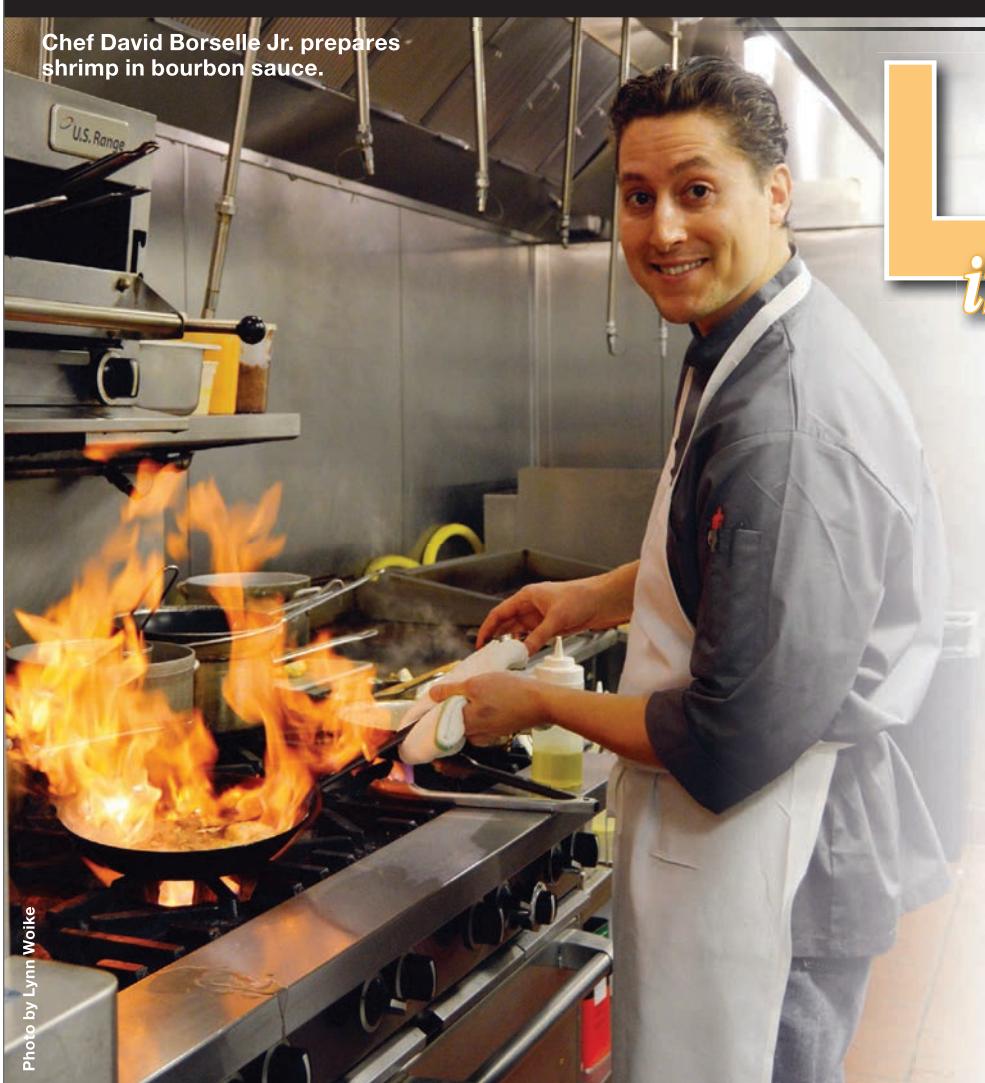
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# LIFE in the kitchen

with David Borselle Jr.

by Lynn Woike  
Editor

**P**ark and Oak Restaurant is the right place at the right time, said chef David Borselle Jr. and his friend and partner, Robert Savin, who opened their eatery at 14-16 Oakwood Avenue at the end of November.

"Park Road ... is very much a cool type of neighborhood. It's separate from the Center. It's different. It's more laid back. There's a lot more parking and accessibility and it's cozy over here. It's more casual," Borselle said of his first restaurant.

They'd worked together on other projects and kept in touch, became friends and talked about doing something together. This idea surfaced last May, and after a deal on a spot in Avon fell apart, Savin said the two signed a lease here in August. The space that had been occupied by other restaurants was completely renovated; only the ductwork is original. The 3,000-square-foot space holds 51 seats.

"We wanted to do a neighborhood restaurant and we wanted to do elevated comfort food," Borselle said of showcasing familiar foods

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such as shrimp and grits, making them "more exciting, more interesting, more appealing."

"What we do separates us from everyone else. It fits in with our theme of our restaurant which is come-as-you-are casual, comfortable, but it's done with a level of elegance to it."

The two developed the menu together.

The coleslaw is made with red cabbage, roasted tomatoes are used in the soup topped with cheesy croutons, and homemade pimento cheese – "an absolute favorite" of his – comes as a sharable and a sandwich. There are burgers and pasta with such twists as pickled vegetables and wild mushrooms. The menu changes about every two months based on "what's available, what's new, what we're excited about [and] what makes sense," Borselle said.

"Our new menu will be featuring our version of deviled eggs with Connecticut eggs and pimento cheese with crispy parmesan, also Pasta Bolognese with fresh, hand-cut pappardelle pasta, peas, parmesan

and ricotta."

Growing up in Burlington, he was part of a large Italian-American family, and with that, he said, came an understanding of family, hospitality, history and the food that goes with it.

The grandmothers and aunts did all the cooking back then.

"I didn't start cooking professionally until I was 17," Borselle said, adding, "I actually had no intentions

restaurant, and the owner approached him to make deliveries for \$1 more than what he was making picking up golf balls – plus tips. He accepted the job. Two months later, one of the cooks didn't show up for work and the owner moved Borselle into the kitchen.

"I got the fever," he said of cooking.

While still in high school, he worked at the restaurant and for the

ing business management for two semesters. When culinary school ended here, he went to culinary school in Italy.

"I found a pamphlet through a chef who happened to stumble across it, called the contact in New York, went to the Italian consulate in New York, got my visa and just went to culinary school, on my own. And I didn't even, at that time, speak [anything more than very basic] Italian."

All the lessons were in Italian; the school provided a translator.

"I fell in love with the culture, the cuisine, the whole lifestyle. I stayed after the school, lived on in Southern Italy with a family and worked at their restaurant; I was a guest chef at the restaurant for four months. ... I got to see northern and southern Italian cooking, the differences and the different products and the history behind the products ... and that stuck with me," Borselle said.

He returned to the States "ready to conquer the world with food" and worked in area restaurants, including Max's Oyster Bar at night, and

## **"It was huge. I went from a line cook position to just taking over the entire kitchen overnight. It was trial by fire."**

**-David Borselle Jr.**

of being a chef. ... My parents actually wanted me to be a lawyer, but I wasn't focused at school; I couldn't sit still."

He began taking odd jobs when he was 14. The first was picking up balls on a driving range. As he was about to turn 18, the small sports pub and grill attached to the driving range tripled in size, becoming a

kosher catering company owned by his best friend's father.

"I was hooked immediately and I kept two full-time jobs and went to Connecticut Culinary School back when it was in Farmington. It was called the Connecticut Culinary Institute," he said.

He also attended Central Connecticut State University, study-



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the Latin-American style restaurant that preceded Max Burger, Azul, during the day.

"I did that six days a week and then I got the bright idea to go be a sous chef at a restaurant in Glastonbury, and a week before we opened, the chef quit and so I turned into an executive chef of a restaurant within a year and a half after finishing my externship in college."

The restaurant was Elisa On The Ave – where the Whole Foods Market is now

"It was huge. I went from a line cook position to just taking over the entire kitchen overnight. It was trial by fire and I did well and the reviews were good and the business was OK, but I was unsettled at that time. No matter what it was, I wanted more and so I applied to all of the Ritz Carlton Hotels in Southern Florida and took a job as a sous chef at the Ritz Carlton in South Beach, Miami, which had only been open for two months.

In the 18 months he worked there, he said he learned more about food service than he would have in five years here.

"I was the palest human in Miami for a year and a half because I never went outside,"

Borselle said, explaining that on his one day off a week, "I was so tired, I would literally sleep the whole day."

Moving back to Connecticut, he worked at a number of places, ending up cooking French food at Union League Cafe across the street from the Yale University campus in New Haven, then opening a sister restaurant, Bar Bouchee, serving French comfort food in Madison.

Savin said that at Park and Oak, the fried chicken – done as crispy chicken biscuits for an appetizer, and as a basket of fried chicken and as fried chicken and waffles as main courses – are among the most popular menu items. Brussels sprouts and other slider appetizers such as fried oyster po' boys and slow roasted beef brisket are also among the top selling items.

The restaurant is open daily for lunch and dinner, except Sunday when it's open only for dinner.

Already, there has been some talk about their next venture.

"I think neither of us can sit still," Savin said.

"I'm fueled by passion and caffeine," Borselle admitted. **WHL**

## David Borselle answered some questions offering more insight on his personality and know-how.

### **Q: What's your "secret weapon" ingredient?**

A: Local honey. Honey is versatile. I use it in everything from just a basic sweetener to soups, my dressings, my stocks. We do a lot of finishing with honey. It goes really well with cheese. Anytime I need to sweeten something up or find some balance, I use honey.

### **Q: What's your least favorite food?**

A: Fast food.

### **Q: What is the one cooking technique that everyone should know how to do?**

A: Grilling. It's so versatile; there're very few things you can't find a way to put on a grill.

### **Q: If you could take any celebrity chef out to dinner, who would it be and where would you take them?**

A: René Redzepi; he's a chef restaurateur who's basically on the forefront of sustainability and foraging and in his restaurant he only serves things are from within a 20-mile radius. His direction and passion are not like anyone else.

### **Q: What is your favorite cookbook?**

A: "Wild Food from Land and Sea," by Marco Pierre White. He's British, very famous in the '70s and '80s. He was the youngest chef to ever get three Michelin stars; he did it when he was in his early 20s.

### **Q: If you weren't a chef, what profession would you be?**

A: Charter boat fisherman. I am equally passionate about fishing and anything to do with water and marine life.

### **Q: What's your "go to" staple dish?**

A: Anything with fresh pasta. Fresh pasta to me, it doesn't get any better than that. Simplicity and elegance, combined in one, and not a lot of people know how to do it right.

### **Q: It's your last meal on earth. What's on your plate?**

A: Ravioli with lots of shaved truffles and a good wine

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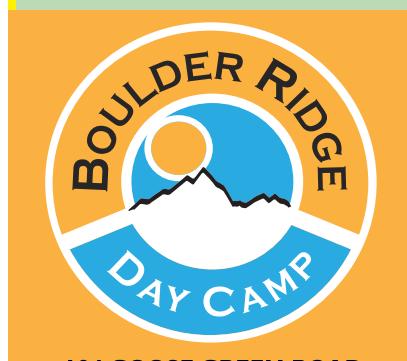


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# Spring Arts

## Local man plays Jesus in 'Godspell'

Little Theatre of Manchester continues its 2017 season with the musical theater phenomenon "Godspell." Parables vibrantly come to life in the beloved family-friendly musical based on The Gospel According to St. Matthew. LTM will produce the 2012 revival version that features updated, contemporary references and new arrangements by the composer of "Wicked" and "Pippin," Stephen Schwartz.

"Godspell" will run April 7-9, 14-15 and 21-23 at Cheney Hall, 177 Hartford Road, Manchester. Friday and Saturday evening performances will be at 8 p.m. and Sunday matinees will be at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$25-\$29 with discounts available for both seniors and students. Tickets can be purchased by calling the Box Office at 860-647-9824 or visiting [www.littletheatreofmanchester.org](http://www.littletheatreofmanchester.org).

[theatreofmanchester.org](http://theatreofmanchester.org).

The role of Jesus will feature the debut of an actor new to LTM's stage. Pediatric dentist Andrew Rosenstein of West Hartford has most recently been seen doing stand-up comedy at the Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods casinos and at the Broadway Comedy Club in New York City.

He was also in an award-winning video named "Frank D. Kay-Professional Cavity" that he created while completing his doctorate of dental medicine and Certificate in pediatric Dentistry at the UConn School of Dental Medicine.

Currently practicing pediatric dentistry in West Hartford and North Windham, Rosenstein auditioned for the role after reading a story about the Little Theatre's search for Jesus in local newspapers.

## Students feel the ArtBeat



Photo by John Flits

The annual ArtBeat West Hartford Public Schools Student Art Exhibit was on display in the Clubhouse and Saltbox galleries at West Hartford Art League last month. The show tradition, coordinated with art education month, dates back more than 30 years, and the schools organize it entirely. Pictured above: "Painting with Paper," a collaboration of artist Amy Genser, working with King Philip Middle School seventh-graders and eighth-graders from Sedgwick Middle School. The league is located at 37 Buena Vista Road and gallery hours are 1 to 4 p.m., Thursday through Sunday. CT+6, a regional juried exhibit, will open April 27.

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Spring Arts

# Events *spotlight*

## 'Connecticut Dances' exhibition makes local stop

In conjunction with the opening of stop/time dance theater's Rockin' The Forest, Playhouse on Park is hosting "Connecticut Dances - A Visual History" exhibition curated by the Connecticut Dance Alliance in partnership with the Connecticut Historical Society. This photographic exhibition brings to life the valuable contribution that dance has played in the cultural vitality of Connecticut.

"Connecticut Dances - A Visual History" exhibition is the culmination of an unprecedented crowd-sourcing initiative "All About Dance in Connecticut" that documents the many facets of the history of dance in Connecticut through an online gallery collection of over 2,000 photographic images submitted by members of the Connecticut dance community over the past two years.

Curated from the online gallery, the exhibition, designed and produced by the Connecticut Dance Alliance, represents a thematically

and historically organized portrait of Connecticut's significant dance heritage of a wide variety of dance forms, important historical dance events, the work of individual dancers, choreographers, companies, and the impact of schools and teachers in the field of dance.

"Connecticut Dances - A Visual History" includes images ranging from the early years of the Shakers, Connecticut's first ballerinas, historic performances, and the study of dance in colleges and universities to the acclaimed American Dance Festival. The exhibition also features an array of cultural dance, internationally, nationally and regionally recognized dance companies that have performed throughout the decades, and dance schools and academies. The exhibition also highlights the numerous dance luminaries such as Ernestine Stodelle, Alwin Nikolais, Angela Bowen, José Limón among others. Through the process of research and curation of the exhibi-

tion, Connecticut's rich dance heritage and connections to Connecticut were revealed.

"Connecticut Dances - A Visual History" exhibition will travel throughout Connecticut accompanied by a compendium of over 70 scholarly essays, articles, memoirs and associated photographs. Tour listing as it develops can be found on [www.ctdanceall.com](http://www.ctdanceall.com).

The exhibition is made possible through funding from The Connecticut Humanities, a nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, supporting cultural and historic organizations that tell the state's stories, build community and enrich lives; the Edward C. and Ann T. Roberts Foundation; The Greater Hartford Arts Council; NewAlliance Foundation; and contributors to Connecticut Dance Alliance.

Playhouse on Park's resident dance company, stop/time dance theater is now in its 14th year led by co-artistic director and choreogra-

pher Darlene Zoller. Featuring Zoller's original choreography and under her direction, stop/time dancers and singers are ready to entertain in a fabulous forest, alive with energy and growing with surprises along the way. Come for the exemplary dancing, lush vocals, live music and an unforgettable twist on your favorite stories: it's all goin' down when stop/time rocks the forest. Music direction is by Eric Larivee.

"Connecticut Dances - A Visual History" exhibition will be open to the public at Playhouse on Park during regular box office hours (Tuesday-Friday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Saturday-Sunday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.). Visit [www.playhouseonpark.org](http://www.playhouseonpark.org) for more information.

"Rockin' The Forest" runs through April 9. Student, senior and Let's Go Arts discounts are available. To purchase tickets, call the box office at 860-523-5900, ext.10. Playhouse on Park is located at 244 Park Road, West Hartford, 06119. **WHL**

**Connecticut Ballet** • Brett Raphael, Artistic Director • presents  
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Jazz – Fosse/Dreyer, Jolson, Rose

Photos: Neil S. Swanson, Juilliard Dance Ensemble, Ben Gancos

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**Easter Egg Hunt**  
**Saturday, April 15th**  
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# 'Mother School'

American School for the Deaf marks its 200th anniversary

by Lynn Woike  
Editor



**A**lice Cogswell became deaf at age 2, following an illness. In 1807, her father, Mason Fitch Cogswell, a prominent Hartford physician, sought the aid of friends and neighbors to alleviate his daughter's condition and to help the deaf population. Five years later, a survey by the Congregational Churches of New England reported 85 deaf persons lived in the state, none of whom had received any education. It also estimated there were 400 deaf persons in New England and 2,000 in the United States.

On April 13, 1815, nine prominent men met with Cogswell to take steps to establish the country's first school for the deaf. In one day, they were able to raise \$2,133 from residents of Hartford that, at the time, had a population of 6,000, said Brad Moseley, coordinator at the Cogswell Heritage House that contains school records.

Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, a recent graduate of Yale College and Andover Theological Seminary, was selected to go to Europe to learn methods of teaching the deaf. He became interested in the deaf after observing Alice's

attempts to communicate with her siblings and the neighborhood children at play, and he taught her some written words.

Unable to reach an agreement with a deaf school in England, Gallaudet was invited by Abbé Sicard, head of the French school for the deaf, to come to Paris. There, he spent about seven months studying teaching methods before getting Sicard's permission for Laurent Clerc, a young deaf instructor there who had become Sicard's assistant, to come to the States. During the 52 days it took for the ship to reach America, Clerc taught Gallaudet to sign and finger spell, and Gallaudet taught Clerc English. Together they traveled New England to garner interest and support to create a school for the deaf here.

Cogswell continued his organizing efforts, obtaining incorporation in May 1816, securing space and raising funds, including \$5,000 from the Connecticut General Assembly. It was the first time in the country a state gave aid to special education.

The school opened in three rooms in the Bennett's City Hotel on



**LEFT:** The Rev. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet was sent to Europe to learn deaf teaching methods, later becoming the school's first principal. **RIGHT:** Laurent Clerc came from France and was the school's first teacher.



Photos courtesy of ADS

Main Street in Hartford on April 15, 1817. Alice was the first pupil, Clerc was the first teacher and Gallaudet was the first principal. It was named the Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons.

"Originally, we started with 12 students," Jeffrey Bravin said through an interpreter. He is the school's 13th executive director and only the second who is deaf.

It was successful from the start, drawing pupils from across the country.

"The second week there were 22 students and more space was

needed," Moseley said. "[A local doctor's] widow rented out the second and third floor of her [Prospect Street] home, so that's where the kids would eat and sleep. The girls took sewing and cooking while the boys had woodworking, tinware and shoemaking. We were the first school to have vocational classes in the State of Connecticut."

Much of the school's rich history is kept in the Cogswell Heritage House that once housed the school's headmasters and executive directors. Among the thousands of items it contains are

the oldest book on sign language in English; books in several languages about deaf education from the 17th, 18th and 19th century; the personal papers of founders Cogswell, Gallaudet and Clerc; along with teaching aids, photographs, portraits and a collection of the school's annual reports.

A reason Gallaudet was interested in educating the deaf, Moseley explained, "was due to the Protestant Movement called the Second Great Awakening. All people had to read and understand the Bible in order to go to heaven."

The school taught sign language from the start – the first in America to do so – in large part, because of Clerc.

In 1820, the U.S. Congress awarded the school a federal land grant: 23,000 acres in the Alabama Territory. This, Moseley noted, was the first instance of federal aid to elementary and secondary special education in the U.S. The money from its sale established an endowment that was used to build the school known as

the Old Hartford on Asylum Hill, which opened in 1821 – where The Hartford is now – and which remained there for 100 years, he said. That ASD endowment is still being used.

Clerc went on to help form more than a dozen other schools for the deaf around the country, and, for that reason, the school here is known as the Mother School, Moseley said.

In 1921 the school moved to its present location at 139 North Main Street in West Hartford. At that time, the campus was comprised of 100 acres, stretching west to Mountain Road. Over the years, about half that property was sold, Bravin said, noting that about 20 acres of what is left is currently for sale. That would leave the school with 28 acres – more than enough room for new dormitories and new buildings that will be needed in the future, he said.

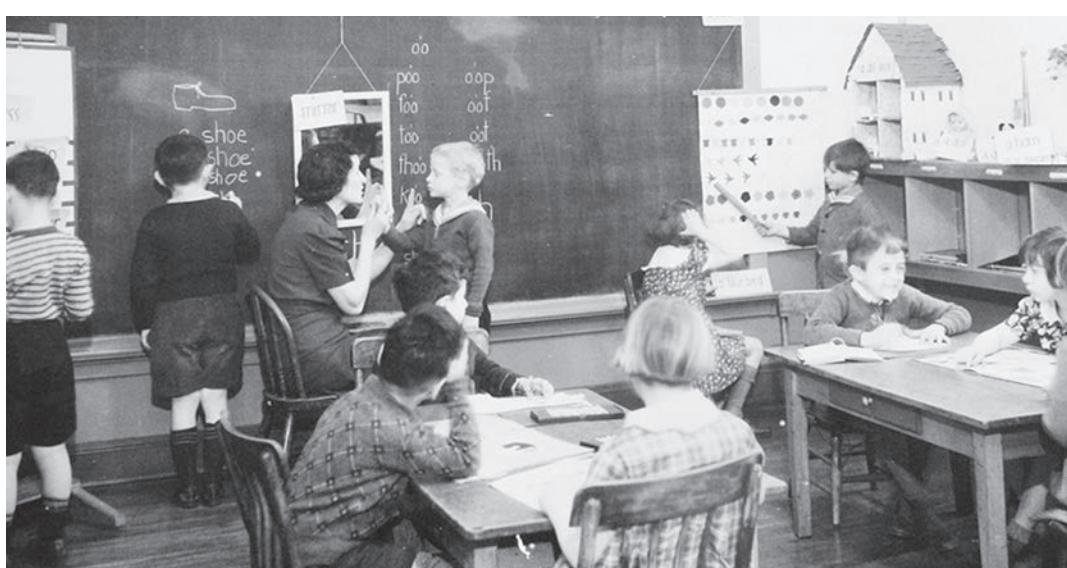
The original 164,000-square-foot building, Gallaudet Hall, was located directly behind the current building.

"It had everything. Their classes were there, dormitories,

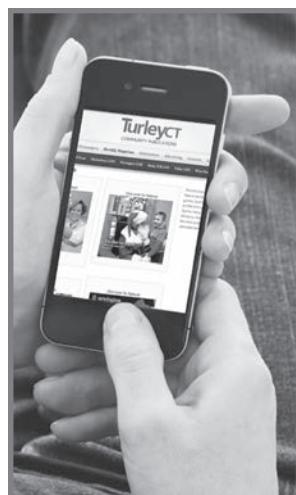


Photos courtesy of ADS

This was the first day of school in West Hartford. For six months, only the boys attended while the girls remained at the Hartford facility. The vehicle behind them was the school's bus.



This 1940s classroom incorporates both manual and visual practices.



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April 18, 2017, 6-7:30 pm

#### LOCATION:

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#### RSVP:

Jeff Euting, MBA, CFP®  
Pyxis Financial Planning

Patti Kane, MBA, CFP®  
Kane Financial Planning

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<sup>1</sup>Jeff Euting, MBA, CFP, dba Pyxis Financial Planning, is an investment advisor representative of and offering investment advisory services through Garrett Investment Advisors, LLC, a fee-only SEC registered investment advisor. Tel: (910) Fee-Only.

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**Executive Director Jeffrey Bravin holds a piece of art by Sam Silver celebrating the school's bicentennial.**

... My dad led the protest at CBS in the 1970s regarding captioning for TV shows."

There were no smartphones that could text. Now, he said, "If I were to shoot you an email, you wouldn't know that I was deaf. ... Technology has really changed the landscape of deaf people. Before, deaf people had limited jobs and options for employment. Today, deaf people, we can do anything, really, with the exception of a few things such as truck driver ... [and commercial] airline pilot."

The future, Bravin said, can be found in a smartphone.

Putting his iPhone on the table, he said there are apps that will interpret a phone call, and others that will emit a hologram that will sign for the deaf.

"Right now, there is an app for video relay services, which means I can travel anywhere I want. I can make a call to you, I sign through the app to the interpreter somewhere in the United States, and that person speaks to you and then they sign back to me. That was wonderful. I have total access wherever I go."

Bravin was invited to have that technology conversation with Colin

McEnroe on his Connecticut Public Radio show about 18 months ago, and that led to another first.

"He said he wanted to do something different. He came up with this idea. They wanted to be the first to have a live interpretive radio show deaf people could have access to. Right now, we can't hear, we can't access."

Earlier this year, there was a show during which various people were interviewed, including Bravin. Interpreters were videotaped and shown live on Facebook.

"It was a live interpreted radio show; you could watch it from anywhere. It was presented in American Sign Language – our national language – so we could finally enjoy a radio show."

Each year, the American School for the Deaf observes Founders Day on the Friday preceding April 15 to honor its forefathers: Cogswell, Gallaudet and Clerc. Due to holidays and school vacation, this year it will be celebrated Tuesday, April 18.

To mark ASD's bicentennial anniversary, several additional events are planned in April and continuing through July 2018.

**This statue in front of the school shows the founder, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet with the first student, Alice Cogswell.**

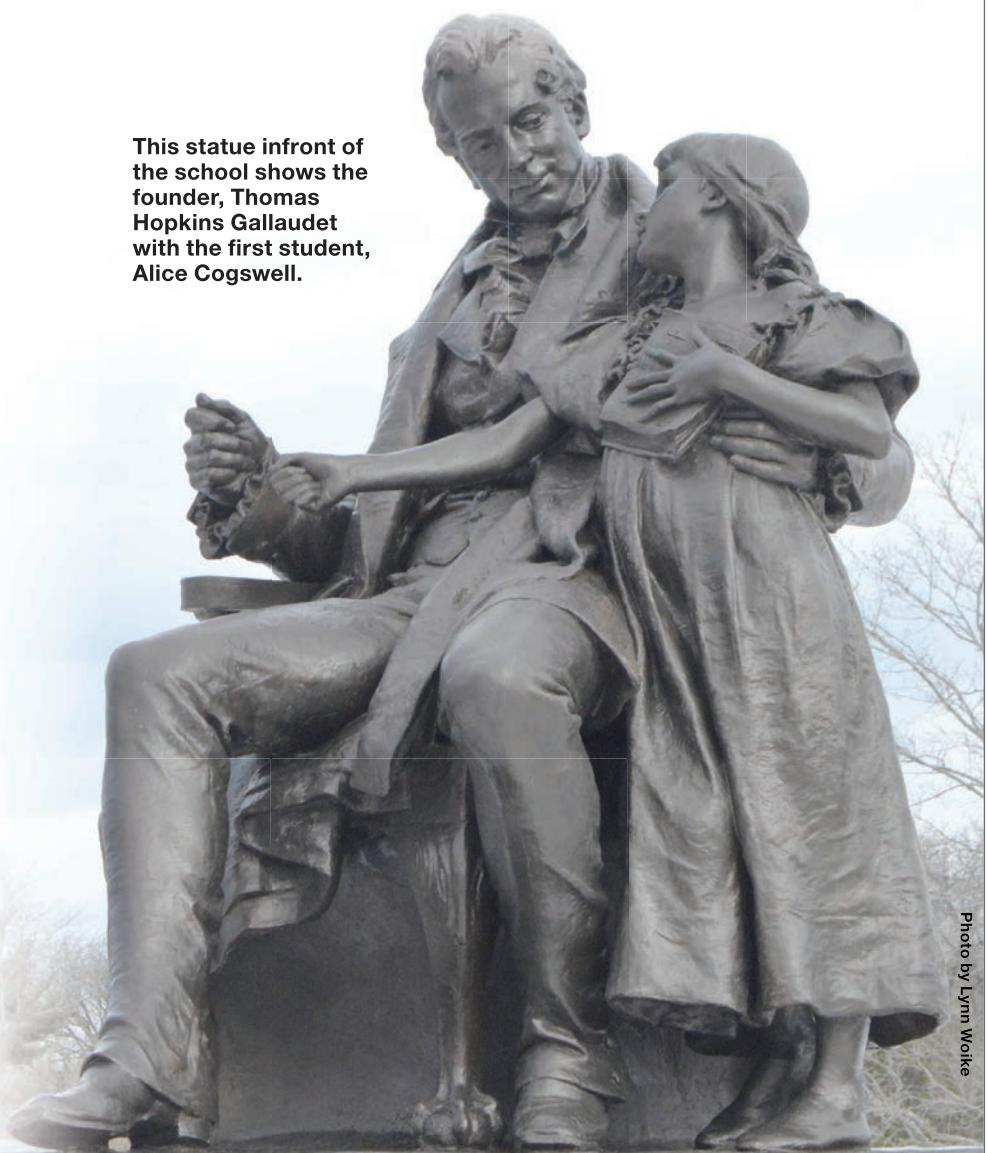


Photo by Lynn Woike

health center. Everything was in that one building," Bravin said.

Student population rose to a high of 500 in the 1960s and 1970s "during the years of rubella when many children were born deaf." It then returned to between 200-250 students, he said.

Currently, 170 attend the school, with about half of them living on campus. They come from throughout Connecticut as well as the country and the world. About 75 percent of students are on the federal school lunch program. In addition, ASD provides services for 210 students in public schools across the state.

In all, more than 5,000 alumni have graduated.

In the early years, Moseley said, students came when they were in their 20s and 30s.

"One of our first students, John Brewster Jr., the painter, came when he was 51 years old and he stayed for three years."

About seven years ago, renovating and remodeling Gallaudet Hall was discussed, but the cost "was exorbitant," Bravin said.

"We couldn't retrofit it to fit the learning needs of students today, so the board of directors decided the best way was to demolish that and build this building," he said of the new 60,000 square feet designed to be fully accessible and outfitted with state-of-the-art technology.

It opened three years ago.

Classrooms have "everything you can think of to meet the needs of every deaf and hard of hearing

student here," Bravin said.

That includes television screens in classrooms, hallways and other spaces, and a digital master auditory system in every classroom that automatically connects with students who have Cochlear implants or hearing aids.

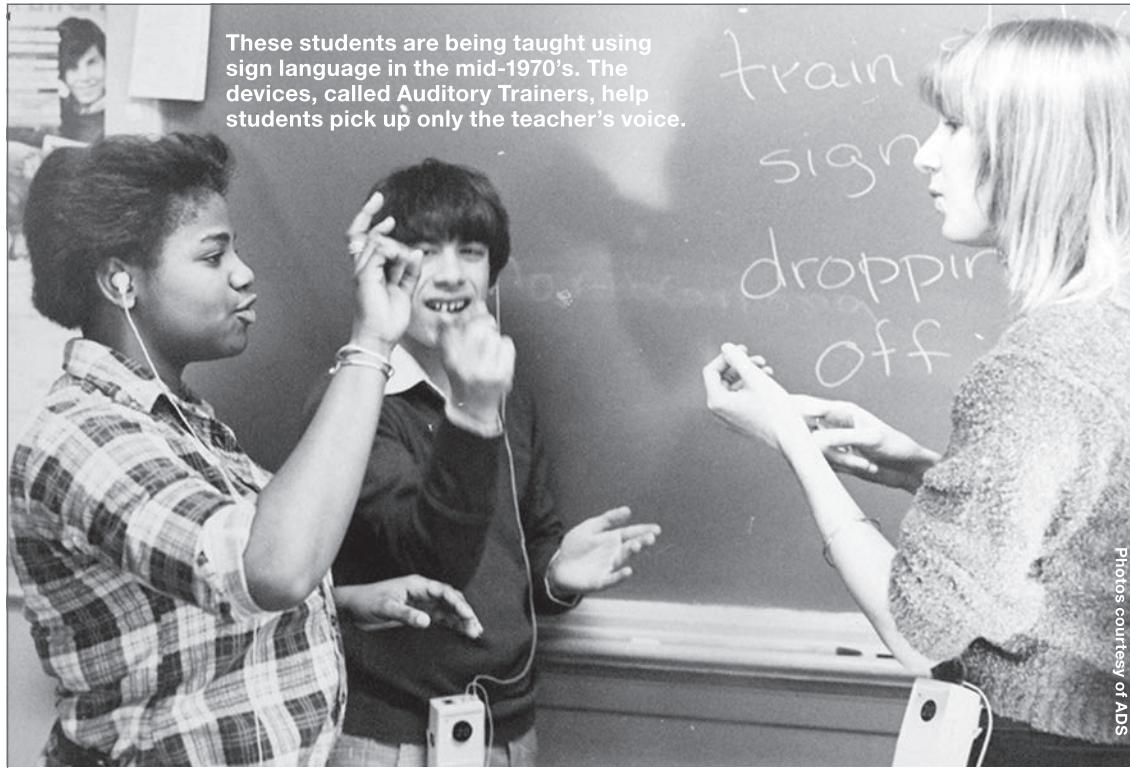
The building was designed by an architect who "addressed what we call 'the deaf space,'" Bravin said, "[There are] wider hallways so that if you're walking with someone, you can sign to the other person. The classroom colors were chosen to be friendly on the eyes so people do not become tired by watching someone signing in front of the wall all day. The lighting design was appropriate. The acoustics in every classroom were specifically designed for deaf and hard of hearing students, so it really fits the population we serve. ... There is no echo in the building."

Where the old building had pillars that blocked lines of sight, "here everything is wide open."

More than anything else, technology has played a role in helping the deaf population.

"I love technology," Bravin said. "My family is deaf, my grandparents were deaf. I'm fourth generation deaf in my family which is very unusual. Most – 90 or 95 percent – of deaf children are born to hearing parents. So to have four generations is unusual."

"Technology had a huge role in our family, especially growing up, because back then there was no captioning on TV or movies."



The 200th anniversary gala, Cabaret, will be held at the Connecticut Convention Center April 21 beginning at 6 p.m. Hartford Steam Boiler CEO Greg Barats is chair of the event, and Academy Award-winning actress Marlee Matlin is serving as the honorary celebrity chair. The following week, an exhibit showcasing the school's history and legacy will open at the Connecticut Historical Society. "Language, Culture, Communities: 200 Years of Impact by the American School for the Deaf" will be open to the public April 28 through October 21.

In addition, ASD is hosting the Conference for Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf April 19-21 at the Downtown Hartford Marriott, a Deaf Chef Culinary Cookoff at ASD on the evening of April 28, the 8th Annual Deaf Culinary Bowl on April 29 at Naugatuck Community College, an art exhibit showcasing the work of deaf and hard of hearing artists at the University of Hartford's Art School in May, a 200-mile historical bike tour across the state June 18-21, the American Society of Deaf Children conference at ASD June 25-27, the National Association of School Nurses for Deaf Children conference at ASD July 11-14, and a Fun to Try triathlon on the grounds of ASD's summer camp in Salisbury on August 12. Monthly speakers' bureau events are also planned throughout the anniversary year to highlight a variety of topics related to history and culture.

Asked to look forward, Bravin

said, "I want to continue the growth of ASD as the Mother School, where we will be a resource to many other schools for the deaf – not only in America, but worldwide. There are many misconceptions in the field of deaf education. People often believe that when a child has a Cochlear implant – about 9 out of 10 deaf children are implanted throughout America – he or she can hear and speak, and do not need a specialized school for the deaf. This is simply not true.

"While some students excel, others fail in a mainstream public school. In order to thrive, it is critical

for all deaf and hard of hearing children to build a strong language foundation early on, and to have access to this language at home. ASD provides this foundation for our students."

The laws are not friendly or flexible and must be changed, he said. They require students to first fail in public schools before they can receive appropriate instructional placement. The window for language acquisition is birth to age

8, yet the average age of students placed at ASD is 12.

"They expect us to do magic – and we do a lot of magic – but to really get them on par at that age is extremely difficult," Bravin said.

Most schools focus on the intellectual aspect of education.

"Here we focus on the whole child: intellectual, emotional and social and physical needs as well. That's been the missing link in many schools," he said.

ASD also supports the families of its students, and will teach anyone who wants to learn sign language

without charge.

Bravin spoke of forming many new collaborations. The school is partnering with Central Connecticut State University to create a new sign language interpreting program at the undergraduate and graduate levels; and in the fall, they will join forces with the University of Connecticut to open the first program in the state to train teachers in the field of deaf education.

In keeping with its mission to meet the needs of every student, ASD plans to open a comprehensive autism program, pending approval from the state departments of Education, and Children and Families.

"This will be the first program of its kind in the country – for both deaf children and hearing children who utilize sign language as their preferred mode of communication," Bravin said. "Many autistic children are nonverbal and will benefit from the visual language stimulation provided at ASD through American Sign Language. We're planning to open this program here at the school in the fall, and we look forward to empowering a new population of students to maximize their unique potential." **WHL**

*More information about the school's anniversary events may be found online at [www.asd200.org](http://www.asd200.org). To learn more about the school, visit [www.asd-1817.org](http://www.asd-1817.org).*

**Executive Director Jeffrey Bravin uses American Sign Language with high school students Saif and Faith.**



***Don't say:  
"Hearing impaired"***

***Do say:  
"Deaf"  
"Hard of hearing"  
"A person with a hearing loss"***

*Photo by Lisa Brisson*

## American School for the Deaf has been housed in five different buildings over its 200 years.



**1.** In 1817, the Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons rented three rooms in Bennett's City Hotel on Main Street in Hartford, across the street from the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art.

**2.** Enrollment increased quickly, and the school rented the second and third floors of the Prospect Street house belonging to the widow of Dr. Day beginning in 1817. In 1884, the name changed to The American Asylum at Hartford for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb.

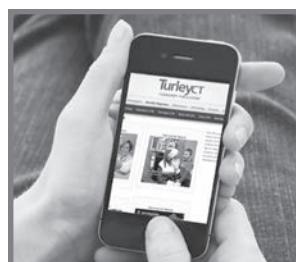
**3.** Using funds from a federal land grant by President James Monroe, a more permanent school was built in 1821 on Lord's Hill – later changed to Asylum Hill named after the American Asylum that became known as Old Hartford.

**4.** In 1921 the school moved to the 164,000-square-foot Gallaudet Hall on 100 acres at 139 North Main Street in West Hartford. Known as the American School for the Deaf, its official name remains American School, at Hartford, for the Deaf.

**5.** The \$32 million project resulted in Gallaudet-Clerc Educational Center opening in 2013 in front of Gallaudet Hall, which was then torn down.



Photos courtesy of ADS



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## You are welcome here! Come for Easter Season!

- **A Lenten Family Event** on April 2, at 10 a.m. While parents are in church, kids can experience hands-on stations like Fruity Palm Trees, Hosanna Banners, and Hot Cross Buns while learning more about Holy Week and Easter. Parents and others can join us after worship. Light lunch served.
- **Palm Sunday Worship**, April 9, at 10 a.m.
- **Taizé Worship**, April 9, in the Chapel at 5 p.m.
- **Arts in the Center Series**: Sunday, April 9, 3 p.m. guest artist will be renowned gospel singer Theresa Thomason, featuring the choral and instrumental music of Paul Halley. (Freewill offering)
- **Easter Sunday**, April 16, Sunrise Service on the lawn at 6 a.m. and worship and music at 10 a.m. inside.
- Our annual **Easter Egg Hunt** will be held after Easter worship on April 16, in front of the church, on the labyrinth. Toddlers through 5th graders are invited to hunt for eggs filled with treats! Bring baskets!



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**Palm Sunday (April 9th)**  
10am: Worship

**Maundy Thursday (April 13th)**  
7pm: Tenebrae Service & Communion

**Good Friday (April 14th)**  
12-3pm: Silent Prayer & Vigil - All Welcome!

**Easter Sunrise Service (April 16th)**  
6:30am: Sunrise Service in the Memorial Garden

**Easter Sunday (April 16th)**  
10am: Easter Worship

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### HOLY WEEK SERVICES

- **Palm Sunday –**  
April 9th - 10 a.m. Service
- **Maundy Thursday –**  
April 13th - 7 p.m. Service
- **Good Friday –**  
April 14th - Service of Tenebrae 7 p.m.
- **Easter - April 16th –**  
6:45 a.m. Sunrise Service  
9 a.m. Traditional Worship  
11 a.m. Morning Joy Contemporary Worship

# Come celebrate with us

**GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
*Worship in the Anglo-Catholic Tradition*

**Palm Sunday, April 9**  
8:00 - Low Mass  
10:30 - Liturgy of the Palms & Solemn High Mass

**Maundy Thursday, April 13**  
6:00 p.m. - Solemn High Mass and Night Watch

**Good Friday, April 14**  
Noon - Good Friday Liturgy and Veneration  
2:00 to 4:00 - Confessions by Appointment  
6:00 - Stations of the Cross

**Holy Saturday - Easter Eve, April 15**  
7:00 p.m. Great Vigil and First Mass of Easter

**Easter Sunday, April 16**  
The Feast of the Resurrection  
8:00 - Low Mass with Hymns  
10:30 - Solemn High Mass

*Join us to keep Holy Week at Grace Church.*



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## ASYLUM HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH HOLY WEEK

**Palm Sunday, April 9 | 9:00 & 10:30am**  
Journey to Jerusalem and the cross in a powerful and dramatic worship experience, as we recall the triumphal entry of Jesus and witness the journey of Christ's Passion and the foreshadowing of the cross to come.

**Maundy Thursday, April 13 | 6:00pm**  
A meditative and reflective worship experience recalling the Last Supper and the final hours Jesus spent with his disciples.

**Good Friday, April 14 | 7:00pm**  
Worship service featuring *Jesu, meine Freude* by J.S. Bach. AHCC's choir and soloists help us begin our journey from Cross to Tomb to Resurrection.

**Easter Sunday, April 16 | 9:00 & 10:30am**  
A celebratory worship service, where death is cast aside and the light of the resurrection shines forth in hymns of praise, words of hope and inspiring music.

Asylum Hill Congregational Church | *Helping people grow in faith and love as disciples of Jesus*  
814 Asylum Avenue, Hartford | 860.525.5696 | [ahcc.org](http://ahcc.org)



Thursday, April 13, 2017, 7:30 PM  
Maundy Thursday Worship



Saturday, April 15, 2017, 1-30-3:30 PM  
Easter Egg Hunt (Especially for ages 4-12)

*Reflecting on the Journey of Faith*  
FBC West Hartford, 90 North Main St, 06107





Photo by Alicia B. Smith

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# Settling in

Town sees increase in Nepalese immigrants

by Alicia B. Smith

Associate Editor

Pramod Pradhan and his wife, Narshila, along with their then 10-year-old son, Abhishek, had won a green card lottery to come to the United States. They were excited about the possibilities in their new home.

"When it came time to leave, you realize you have to start from the beginning. That's the scary thing," Pradhan said of this common immigrant experience. "It's not a place you are familiar with, the culture; you fear you'll never see older family again. When people come over here that is what I see in their face, 'Now what?'"

His family has been in this country since 2004. Abhishek is now a senior at the University of Connecticut and the family calls West Hartford home. Pradhan is the community engagement librarian for the West Hartford Public Libraries and his wife works at Hartford Public Library.

When the family moved to town there were about 50 people from their native Nepal here and that number has since blossomed to 600.

"We are a very close-knit family," Pradhan said of the Nepalese community.

Pradhan has been working to help the population get involved in the community, including taking part in local events and sharing their thoughts on community issues. He encourages them to participate in Hello West Hartford and Celebrate! West Hartford.

"Take part so we can show what we are, share our rich culture," he said.

"They are slowly trying to come out and get connected to different problems and speak out," he said. "It's another step in being more involved."

Pradhan also wants to help adults who may find that their life becomes focused on their job and family, two very important things, however, he believes it's important for adults to make some time for

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Courtesy photos



The Teej festival in Nepal is a celebration of women for the health of her husband and their long-term relationship.

themselves to take classes or go back to school.

"It makes such a difference in your quality of life," he said. "We have to find them a support system."

Many were happy to have the opportunity to come to this country and West Hartford became a draw because of the population that was already here, Pradhan said, adding that those in the immigrant community are always willing to help new arrivals get settled, even if they are

from another part of the globe.

The Nepalese Association of Connecticut became a 501(c)3 organization in 2009. Its mission is to promote goodwill and cooperation among the Nepalese living in Connecticut, and to hold cultural activities and festivals. The organization also raises funds for various causes including assisting those impacted by natural disasters in Nepal and the U.S. In addition, the organization hosts blood drives,

tax filing seminars, programs for homebuyers and help with public speaking.

"NACCONN is a non-profit organization established by the American-Nepalese people living in the state of Connecticut. With the growing population of Nepali origin in the state, a need was obviously felt for an official organization to encourage cooperation, goodwill and mutual support among these Nepalese residents with various sec-

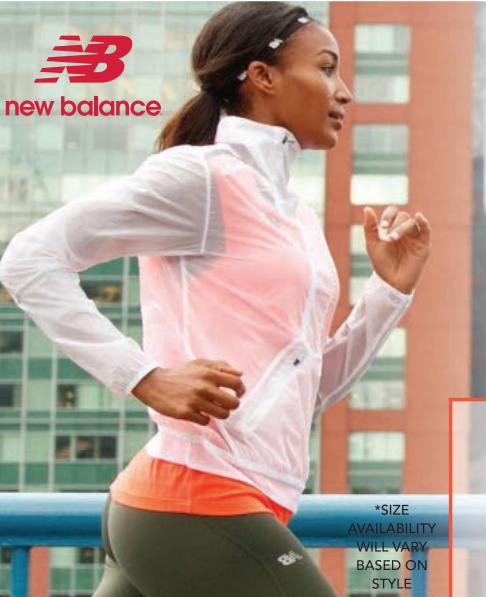
**"The strength of West Hartford community lies within its citizens who are very welcoming and very friendly, which will make any immigrants coming to this place easily call it as their home."**

**-Shankar Dhakal**

tors within our state," NACCONN President Shankar Dhakal said.

Dhakal came to this country with his wife in July 2003 and three years later they were joined by their two sons. The family has lived in West Hartford since 2006.

Dhakal said that a big draw for the Nepalese community to West Hartford is the school system and



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4E	6-11, 12, 13, 14-18
6E	6.5-14, 15, 16, 17, 18

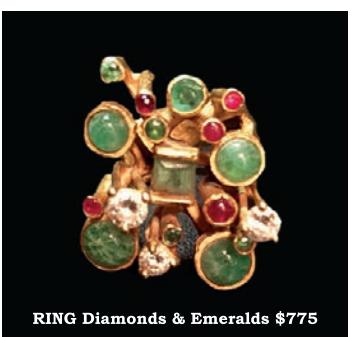
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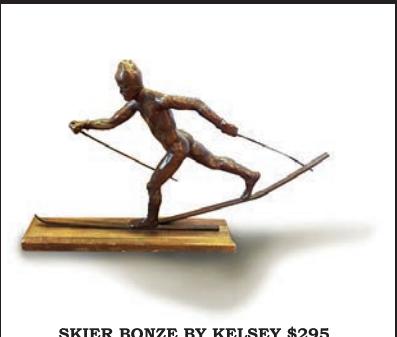
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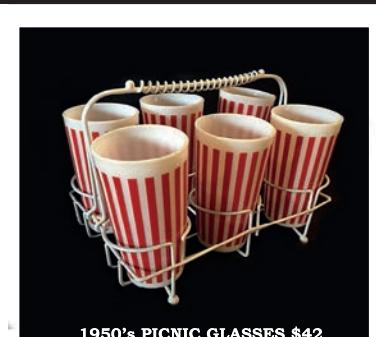
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Courtesy photos

since his two children attended local schools he said he would certainly recommend them to others.

"Also [a] major factor is the West Hartford community is excellent and [a] great place to have a family get established. The strength of West Hartford community lies within its citizens who are very welcoming and very friendly which will make any immigrants coming to this place easily call it as their home," Dhakal said.

"This great town has welcomed us, and if I as [an] immigrant bring my family here, then I will definitely ask or bring new additions to this community of West Hartford. That is a reason why I believe our population has grown up since the day I moved in 2003."

The town's proximity to colleges and universities also plays a role "because parents of the prospective college students often tend to stay close to university after all," he said.

In addition, West Hartford has the advantage of being close to Hartford, and is easily accessible through CTfastrak and other transportation options.

Like Pradhan, Dhakal also encourages the local Nepalese to get involved in their new community.

"My message through this organization to our members and Nepalese living in this town is to research and be involved," he said, referring to NACONN. "After all, our different identity is our unique

strength; our identity is our power through which we can make a difference. We should not be hesitant, for example, to teach someone about Nepal and Nepali culture."

Dhakal urges members of the Nepalese community to get involved in events in town and in the schools as a means to highlight the Nepalese culture. He also encourages "respecting people's views and promoting an environment of good team spirit, tolerance and trust because promotion of respect and love is personal duty of all of us which is a must. I think the promotion of trust and love aids in community building," he said.

"A proper representation helps to resolve any problems, thus I ask my Nepalese community to represent themselves and help every one of us solve any difficulties and hardships," he said.

"West Hartford is our home, Connecticut is our home and I firmly believe with working on hand to hand, working in partnership with local, regional and national community organizations to benefit its members and community as a whole will help [in] implementing educational and various other activities which will benefit our societies and our wonderful greatest nation that we call United States of America," Dhakal said.

"It's a community that is growing," Pradhan said of the Nepalese population.

In 2006, he was instrumental



**The Dashain is the largest and longest festival among the Nepalese.**

in founding NACONN, which now has more than 500 members.

The association hosts cultural and social events, and offers a summer school to teach children Nepali, the native language of Nepal.

The association is currently preparing for Nepal Sambut, or Nepali New Year, which will be celebrated by the association on April 9. (The actual holiday is on April 13 when the year 2074 will begin.)

Pradhan said these types of associations, much like the nationality clubs of the past, could help newcomers meet other immigrants and help keep a connection with their culture. He also encourages new arrivals, no matter where they are from, to come to the library and take advantage of the resources available there.

"Even if we don't have what they need, we can get it," Pradhan said, adding that the library can be a place to help others buy homes,

find a job, including assisting with how to write a resume, which is often a new experience for an immigrant.

"The library can be a big player in making the world a better place," he said.

Nepal is a small country most known for the highest peak in the world: Mount Everest. It has a population of 29 million people and is the only country in that part of the world not to be ruled by a foreign power.

In 2015 the area suffered a massive earthquake and Katmandu, the capital city, is still rebuilding from this devastating disaster.

Pradhan said that his native country does not have many natural resources and tourism is a large part of its economy.

He has not been back to his homeland, however, he did say that technology helps him and his family keep in touch with relatives. **WHL**



Rabbi Stephen Fuchs' newest book, "ToraHighlights," a series of short essays, was published this past fall in both English and German.

Photo by Lena Stein

# 'The future is ours to shape'

Rabbi Stephen Fuchs writes his second book

by Mara Dresner  
Staff Writer

**R**abbi Stephen Fuchs' newest book, "ToraHighlights," was published this past fall in both English and German and is a collection of short comments on each weekly Torah portion. Fuchs has spent extensive time lecturing and teaching in Germany.

His first book, "What's in It for Me? Finding Ourselves in Biblical Narratives," was published in 2014 and has been translated into German and Russian; a Spanish edition is in the works. He's also published more than 100 articles, essays and book chapters on subjects pertaining to Jewish life and Jewish-Christian relations.

Fuchs served as senior rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel from 1997 until 2011. Following his retirement from Beth Israel, he began an appointment as president of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, a position he held until October 2012.

He participated in the historic meeting of Pope John Paul II with Jewish leaders in Miami, Florida in 1987, and was among 90 leaders invited to the White House for breakfast with the Clintons and Gores in 1993 and 1997.

He is a past chair of the Central Conference of American Rabbis Committee on inter-religious affairs, and was elected to serve on the National Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism. He has served on the board of directors of Foodshare and the Hartford Rotary, and was an adjunct faculty member at the Hartford Seminary and Saint Joseph College. In 2004 Fuchs received the first annual Judaic Heritage award from the Charter Oak Cultural Center. In October 2006 he was given the Legion of Honor award by the Chapel of Four Chaplains, a national non-profit that honors those who exhibit outstanding volunteer service to one's community and fellow human beings without regard for faith or race.

Rabbi Fuchs took the time to answer a few questions for LIFE.

**Q:** How did you decide to write "ToraHighlights"?

**A:** When I finished my first book, the constant advice was I have to have a blog. At first I was not interested in having a blog. Everybody has a blog. Then it was like a wave. It was a way to get ideas out there. I became very interested in having a blog and have 400 essays out there.

I had a partner in Germany, Lutheran Pastor Ursula Sieg. One day she said, "I'm not interested in football and all these other things. You need to write about Torah. I think you should write a short column on each [week's Torah portion] and I'll translate them into German." We started along and each week I'd write on something. She had said 200 words. I said, "That's too short." She said, "It needs to be something short, something you can read in one bite." We agreed on 300 words. I like short essays. It really forces you to get to the point. It's not hard to write commentary; it's hard to get to 300 words without sacrificing what's essential.

She would translate every week. Lena Stein [a photographer from Avon] came and took pictures. And we put together this beautiful book with the English and the German on facing pages.

**Q:** What are you hoping people will get out of the book?

**A:** There are four main objectives. Number one is to provide a meaningful column for each weekly Torah portion, so you can get an angle. Unlike the first book, it's not a comprehensive attempt to encapsulate the meaning of the Biblical narrative flow. I'm trying for one idea I can massage and show how it relates to our lives today.

And hopefully this book beautifies the Shabbat table. You can learn from this book and treasure it in the home; it really is quite lovely. You can read it before you light the Sabbath candles. I would love to see that happen in lots and lots of homes.

Third is the acknowledgement that there's a very strong link that non-orthodox Judaism owes to German Jewry. We are the

inheritors of the German traditions that began in the mid-19th century: Why can't men and women sit together? Why does the service have to be in Hebrew? Why does the service have to be endless? These essential reforms, if you will, came to the United States and are the hallmarks of Reform, and, I would say, Conservative practice today. [Congregation] Beth Israel was founded by German Jews. On a Friday night in 1936, 90 percent of the people at a service were of German ancestry. That's far from true today, but it's that legacy this book wants to pay tribute to.

Finally, and one could put this first in importance, it's a gesture of reconciliation. Germany has done so much to compensate or make up for horrors of the Shoah; you can never atone. The help, the aid Germany gives to Israel is enormous, the retooling of the economy is very much something Germany contributed to. It's a gesture of reconciliation.

**Q: Your new book came together much faster than your first book, "What's in It for Me? Finding Ourselves in Biblical Narratives." Tell me about that process.**

**A:** The book began to germinate way, way back when I was a young rabbi. I started out not as an assistant rabbi but at a congregation in Columbia, Maryland. They paid me very little and to supplement my income, the Baltimore Board of Rabbis asked me to be an instructor for a 10-session Introduction to Judaism [course]. It was designed for people who were thinking of converting, people who were marrying Jews, even Jews who didn't think they had a sufficient background growing up. It was an exciting challenge and a daunting one, [condensing] 5,400 years of thought, thinking and practices into a couple of hours. As I began to work on this, it was not difficult to find good material on the holy days and festivals, on history, even on modern Jewish thought. But back in the '70s, there was nothing really of a commentary on Torah, which is really the essence of our whole enterprise, from a non-Orthodox perspective. The first non-Orthodox commentary didn't appear until 1981.

I wanted to start to work on something that would fill that gap. I took a sabbatical in the early '80s to start to do some writing. I moved to Nashville and while I was serving at a large synagogue, I had the opportunity to study for a doctor of divinity at Vanderbilt University. Vanderbilt had never had a rabbi before and they said, "What do you want to do?" I told them, "I want to take every PhD

course on the Hebrew bible you offer. I want to write my dissertation based on that." They told me, "That sounds fine; do whatever you want." The essence of the dissertation was the academic of "What's in It for Me?" My jumping off point was going back to when we first started, the truth of the Torah. It has little to do with history and nothing to do with science, and everything to do with what can we do to live more meaningful lives.

Why is this here? What can it teach me to help me be a better person? When I left World Union for Progressive Judaism and had my second open heart operation, in that period of recovery, I said, "What am I going to do now?" I had no job; I had a very long physical recovery. I decided to finish the book I started 40 years ago. It had to be completely redone, of course. I was very proud of the dissertation I wrote, but no one would be interested reading it as a popular book. I'm very proud of it. There are 35 5-star reviews on Amazon. I love to speak on it; it's opened up some nice doors. I like to say it keeps me off the streets and I've enjoyed it every much.

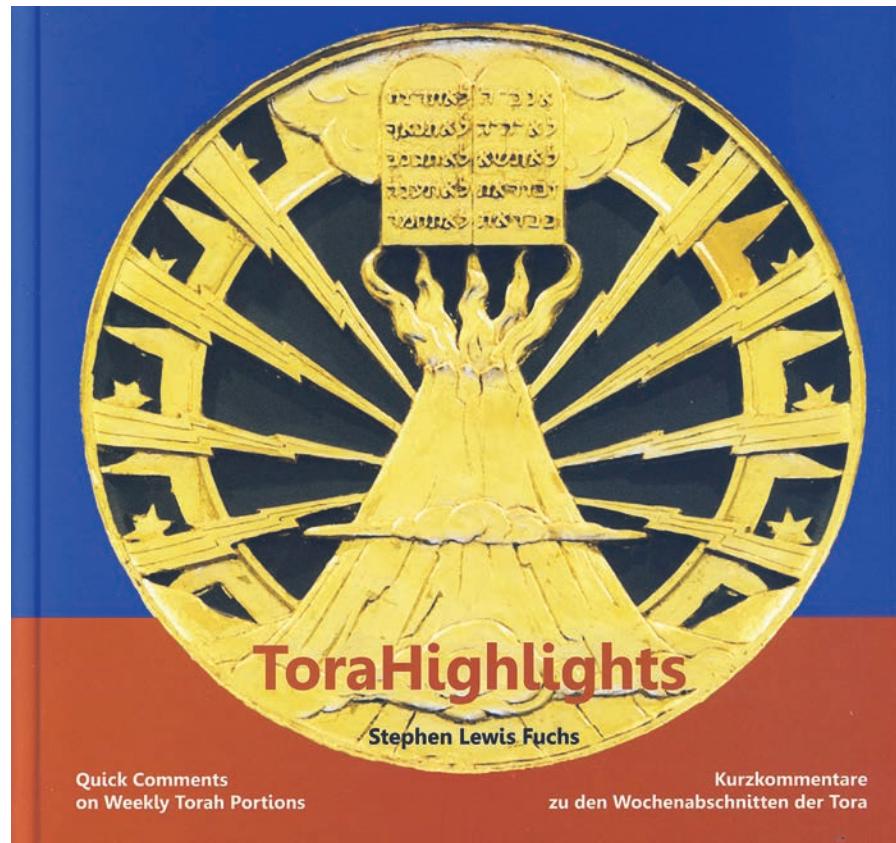
**Q: What is the role of religion in these times?**

**A:** I think it can play a very important role. If we study the stories in the Torah with the question in mind, "What is in it for me," I really think it can yield vital guidelines to help us lead more meaningful lives.

Take the story of creation. I don't believe the world was created in six days. I don't think it was a scientific account, that God separated the skies. I don't believe the moon is a little light to rule the night and the sun a big light to rule the day. I'm not looking there for science. I'm not looking there for history. It's nothing about how the world was created and so much about why. Of all the creatures of the earth, we are responsible for the earth and we need to take care of it. We can't ignore global warming. To me, our responsibility to take care and be responsible for this earth and not just exploit it for own selfish needs is huge and it's right there.

Let's take the story of the Exodus. Scholars say there's no record that this happened. Other people say, "Of course this happened." Did this really happen? I don't know. If Monday morning, there's irrefutable proof that there was no Exodus, I'd still be ready to celebrate Pesach [Passover] because of the ideas of the story.

In the story of Cain and Abel, the two brothers brought offerings and



one was accepted and one was not. Why? Truthfully, I don't know why. One brought junk and one did not, according to the rabbis. The Hebrew tells me they both brought their best offerings. We all know we've made offerings that have not been accepted. Did you ever study for a test and get a C? Or try out for head cheerleader or a job and not get it? There are a litany of events where we can be like Cain. When we're like Cain, we can be angry and jealous. Let's say I submit an article to some journal [and they reject it] and then when I see what they publish the next month, I think, "How can they publish this crap and not mine?" We learn God cares. With anger and jealousy, don't let it rule you or you get into trouble. What does it teach me about God? God is a force within us of right and good. Of course we're our brother's keepers. And all of this comes from a story of 16 sentences.

**Q: You've been honored for your community service work. Why is it so important to participate?**

**A:** I think the reason our religion emerges from the pages of history, and I want to see that continue, is it's underlying for us that we humans are using our talents and abilities to try in some way to make the world a better place. To me, it's the underlying foundation of my religion. Yesterday, I was asked to speak about Israel at the Montessori school in Simsbury. It wasn't a terribly large group and before I started to talk about Israel, I asked them, "If your parents kicked

you out of the house tomorrow and you had to get a job, what would you do?" A lot of them said, "I don't know" at first and then they came up with what they wanted to do. I said to them you want to be an actor, a dentist, this or that, actors can be selfish and spend all of their money lavishly and then there are those who give their effort and money to good causes. Dentists can [care] only how many patients run through their office in a day or week or dentists can spend a significant amount of time caring for people in poor areas in this country or overseas who can't afford dental care. A, it's about what you're good at and what you find satisfying and meaningful. But whatever you do, I hope you consider it your obligation to make that occupation contribute to the betterment of the world. That belief fuels what I do as a rabbi.

When I go to Germany and speak at churches to people whose parents and grandparents were Nazis, I say, "We can't undo the past but the future is ours to shape." That's a line I probably work into every speech I give there. Sometimes people have tears in their eyes; they know their history. I say to them when I'm doing this, I'm not curing cancer; I'm not making peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. I wish I had the power to do that. This is what I can do and on a fundamental level what God wants us to do, to do what we can to make the world a little better. **WHL**

Learn more at [rabbifuchs.com](http://rabbifuchs.com).

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# LIFE long ago

Looking back at the town's history

by Lynn Woike  
Editor

In the bound volumes at the back of the town clerk's office are thousands of pages of minutes for meetings and public hearings that have shaped West Hartford into the town it is today. Here are some snapshots from April through the years.

## 150 years ago: April 1867

At the request of 36 legal voters, a special town meeting was held to consider building an arch stone bridge on the stream north of Crosby Corner and straighten out Main Street South (near the residence of Timothy Sedgwick). It was adopted. The selectmen were also granted the right to make repairs to the town hall roof as they deemed appropriate.

## 1892

According to the Selectman's Report for the fiscal year ending October 1, in April, the janitor was paid \$15, repairs in E. School totaled \$47.15 and \$9.60 was spent on singing books. On April 2, tax collector J.M. Foote Jr. reported \$20,565.61 was received in taxes.

## 120 years ago: 1897

At a meeting of the Selectmen and Sewer Commission April 12, Edward Beach introduced the matter of a card index and it was agreed that the town clerk be employed to complete 1,000 cards, indexing warrantee deeds.

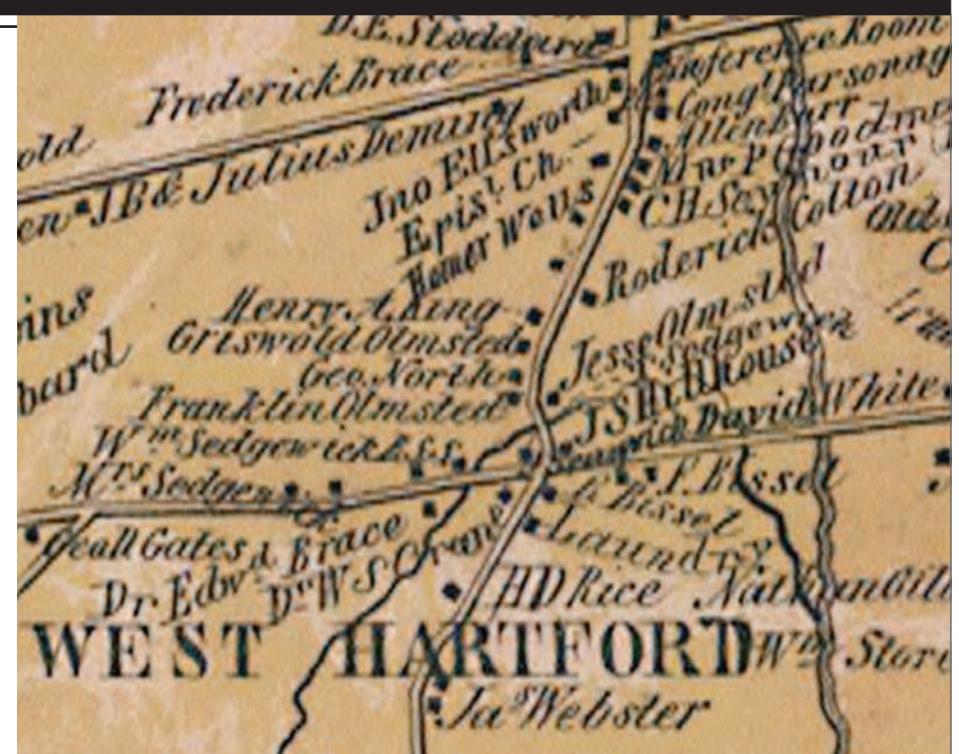
At a special meeting concerning "sewer for the 'East Side'" held April 30, nearly 40 taxpayers were present. The proposal was for \$10,000 be "for use of intercepting sewer system and Farmington Avenue sewer," \$2,019 to rebuild a portion of the sewer on Farmington and \$7,176 "for enlargement of sewer in Prospect Avenue, accommodating a brook." It was voted to appoint a committee of

three to act with the sewer commission in regard to the matter. It was opposed "as providing for but a small part of the town." The wording about the \$10,000 intercepting sewer was thought to be ambiguous and the hearing was adjourned for one week.

## 110 years ago: 1907

The Consolidated Railway wanted to extend a single track along Asylum Avenue westward to Steele Road about 700 feet south of Albany Avenue. A public hearing April 5 drew "about 30 persons, including three ladies," most of whom were interested in having the track extend further than what was proposed.

At a meeting April 8 of the Selectmen and Commissioners, the railway was authorized to construct a single track as requested in the previous meeting, with the selectmen earnestly requesting the



This portion of a map from 1855 shows the portion of Main Street that required straightening.

company to continue the railway to Albany Avenue.

Also April 9, William A. Wells asked that in granting a license for Luna Park, there be a clause prohibiting opening from 12 o'clock Saturday night to 6 o'clock Monday morning, and stipulating that any violation be cause to revoke the license. The petition had 56 signers.

The license had already been granted that contained nothing relative to Sunday opening. About a half dozen of those who signed the peti-

tion attended and argued against Sunday opening, saying frequenters of the park disturbed "the quiet of Sunday" in Elmwood. They ask the selectmen to enforce the Sunday laws, but no action was taken.

## 100 years ago: 1917

Selectmen and commissioners met April 9 and among the bills it paid were \$136.26 to the Connecticut Hospital for the Insane, \$1.50 to C.O. Puritan, \$26.81 to J. Levin, \$12.67 to E.G. Tavener & Co. and \$26.58 to



Some locals petitioned in 1907 to close Luna Park on Sundays.

H.G.W. Moore.

At the Board of Finance meeting April 10, the plan for sewers was discussed but no solution to the problem was found and the matter was deferred "to some future time."

The board deferred action on proposed sidewalks for New Britain Avenue at Elmwood, with shop owners speaking for and other landowners speaking against them. Sidewalks were, however, approved for Jessamine Street and Vera Street.

"In accordance with a war time order of the Government, it was decided to notify the following wireless operators to discontinue their apparatus: H.A. Hitchcock, W.B. Spencer, M. Steele, L.D. Fish."

At its April 23 meeting, the lowest bidder – W.T. Ryan Construction

Annual Town meeting. Mr. S.L. Root made a brief statement in regard to the plan for the encouragement of the planting of gardens and said that about \$500 would be needed to finance the project until it should be returned by the general committee having the matter in charge." Noting that the town probably did not have "the legal authority to use its funds for any such purpose," Mr. Beckwith suggested the money be raised by subscriptions. Following a general discussion, \$120 was raised by those present.

Also in April, it was decided to buy a federal truck for \$2,200 for street work, and there was a discussion about a small park formed by the division of North Main Street at its intersection with Albany

### 50 years ago: 1967

The Council's Center Parking and Traffic Committee recommended at the April 11 meeting to hire a firm of planning consultants for six weeks at a cost of \$1,500 to draft an outline of what needed to be done to solve the parking problems, after which a decision would need to be made to hire the firm to implement the plan (at an estimated cost of \$25,000-\$30,000) or to assign the work to the town planner's office. The \$1,500 was appropriated.

A resolution was adopted authorizing McLeod, Ferrara and Ensign to proceed immediately with the plans for the new William H. Hall High School. The council also accepted the plans for an ice skating rink drawn up by the firm

children attending the town public schools." It tabled the matter pending receipt of the minutes of the board meeting when the matter was heard.

Three thousand dollars was added to funds already appropriated to match a grant to complete the development of Kennedy Park's picnic area, tennis courts and new sidewalks, along with grading, seeding, etc.

### 25 years ago: 1992

The \$113 million budget adopted by the town contained \$1 million in savings as a result of cooperation from the unions. Leaf pick up and cemetery maintenance were among the services privatized.

Town hall rental rates were set, ranging from \$0 for official town business, to \$650 for eight hours for metropolitan non-profit groups, commercial organizations and private functions considered to be beneficial to the community.

### 20 years ago: 1997

Following a series of community meetings, discussions, brainstorming and evaluating proposed ideas, a document for PictureElmwood was given to the Town Council, describing its vision 2007.

By a 5-4 vote, the \$128.6 million budget passed.

### 10 years ago: 2007

The Town Council adopted a \$203 million budget by a vote of 8-0.

### 5 years ago: 2012

The Town Council referred to Town Planning and Zoning the matter of declaring 90 Raymond Road to be surplus, thus making it available to become the site of a hotel.

Also in April, the council approved \$3,955,000 for capital improvement projects for the upcoming fiscal year. Topping the list, by cost, were street reconstruction, improvements to schools and town building improvements.

### 1 year ago: 2016

Both the Republican and Democratic Town Council caucuses issued letters to state Sen. Beth Bye supporting legislation aimed at combating the negative impacts of a planned Niagara Bottling plant in Bloomfield.

By a 6-3 vote, the Town Council adopted a town budget of \$267.9 million for fiscal year 2016-17. **WHL**



In 1967, the Town Council hired a consulting firm for \$1,500 to outline what needed to be done to solve the parking problems in the Center.

Co. for \$17,076.50 – was awarded contracts for sewers on several streets including Fern Street, Auburn Street and Quaker Lane Extended.

At a meeting April 30, the Board of Finance was joined by "the Selectmen for the consideration of the Food supply and Garden problem referred to the joint boards by the

Avenue. It was voted that S.L. Root prepare a detailed plan of the intersection.

### 75 years ago: 1942

On April 13, the Town Council established a housing authority with five members; Richard Jones was the first chairman.

of Jon D. McGee and authorized the manager to seek bids.

On April 25, the council discussed a communication from the Board of Education, which had been asked to provide the three Roman Catholic schools in town with "the same medical, nursing and dental care that is now given to the

# News roundup

## Town may not buy UConn campus

The town and the University of Connecticut engaged in dialogue in recent weeks regarding the planned purchase of UConn's West Hartford campus, which is now unlikely to come to fruition.

Town Manager Ron Van Winkle announced at the Feb. 28 Town Council meeting that, due to fiscal pressure brought on by the state budget and significant cuts contained within it in funding to municipalities, now may not be the right time for the town to buy the 58-acre parcel on Trout Brook and Asylum Avenue and the five buildings on site.

In a letter to Richard Orr, vice president and general counsel for the University of Connecticut, Van Winkle said the town would not be able to end its due-diligence period in March and make its next \$750,000 payment. So far, the town has paid a non-refundable \$250,000 deposit.

A remaining \$4 million would be due at closing, which was tentatively set for the beginning of October 2017 when the university intends to relocate its campus to downtown Hartford.

He asked UConn to extend the deadline for its due-diligence period to two weeks after the state budget adoption, but also told the university it should free to seek another buyer.

In a response letter sent to the town March 2, Orr offered to extend the outside diligence date to May 1, but said the university could not extend it further out as state budget negotiations could continue into the fall.

The town accepted that offer.

It is not only the cost of the actual purchase that is of concern, but also the costs of building demolition and soil remediation that will not be manageable by the town at this time, Van Winkle said.

If the town does not purchase the site, it will have limited control – primarily through Town Plan and Zoning regulations – over the plan for the campus, which is zoned single-family residential.

## Petition presented

A crowd gathered in the Town Hall chambers in late February to ask the

Town Council to declare West Hartford a sanctuary city.

Although Mayor Shari Cantor presented a proclamation just weeks prior outlining her reasoning for not designating the town as such, but reaffirming the commitment of town officials to welcoming and respecting all citizens – including those “seeking safety and refuge and a place in the great American dream – those who spoke during public comment Feb. 28 felt a formal statement is needed.

Representatives of the group, many who said they attended the West Hartford Rally for Immigrant and Refugee Rights in the beginning of February, presented the council with a petition signed by more than 1,000 residents.

Gabriela Valdiglesias, a Hall High School student whose family immigrated to West Hartford from Peru 16 years ago, said that while the group “applauds” Cantor’s proclamation and feels the statement made in it that the West Hartford Police Department will follow The Trust Act – which became state law in 2013 and addresses detainee protocol – is “an excellent step in the right direction,” in light of President Donald Trump’s “anti-refugee policies, we feel that [Cantor’s] proclamation ... is not enough.”

In her initial proclamation, Cantor said she opted not to designate the town a sanctuary city, which is a municipality that has a policy of protecting unauthorized immigrants by refusing to turn them over to the federal government for deportation and ensuring they have access to town or city services, because there is no legal definition of such a city.

“As elected officials, we ensure that our town does everything in our power to remain welcoming to all and to uphold the shared values of humanity, equality and dignity,” she said.

Both she and Town Manager Ron Van Winkle said they have been and will continue to review procedures with Police Chief Tracey Gove to be sure best practices are in place.

“We’ve been focused on activities and providing resources to assist these residents in whatever way we can,” Cantor said. “We want to take meaningful action, we don’t just want to wear a name.” **WHL**

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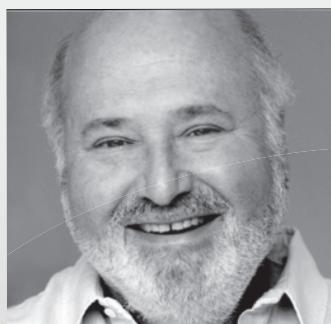
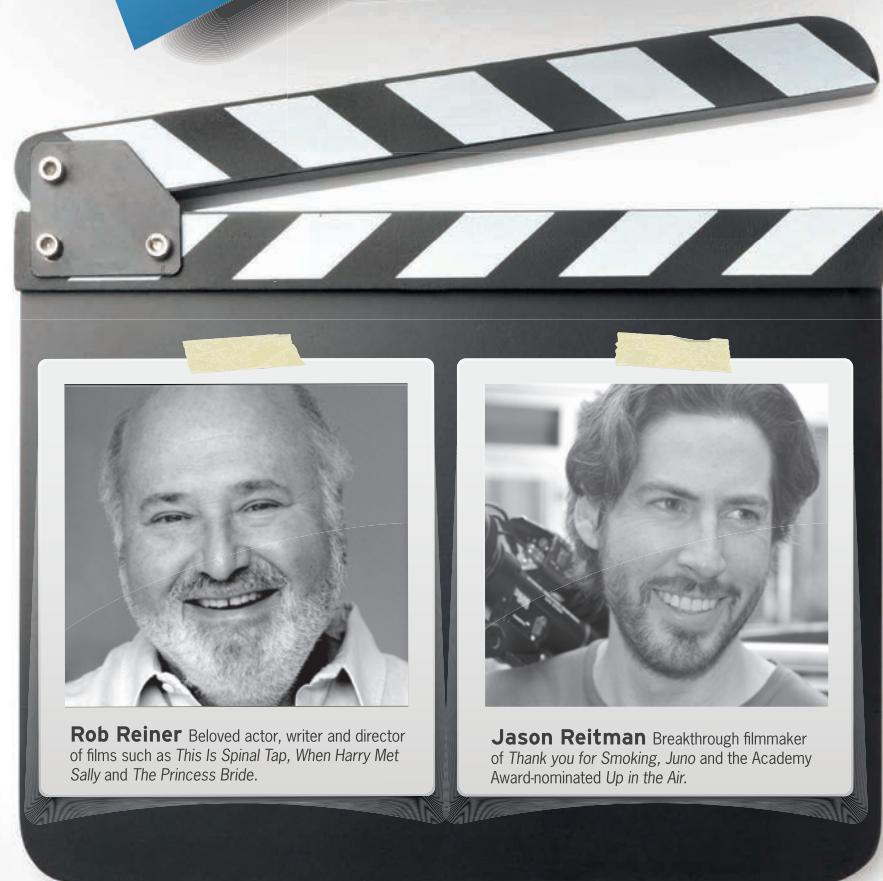
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# Slice of LIFE

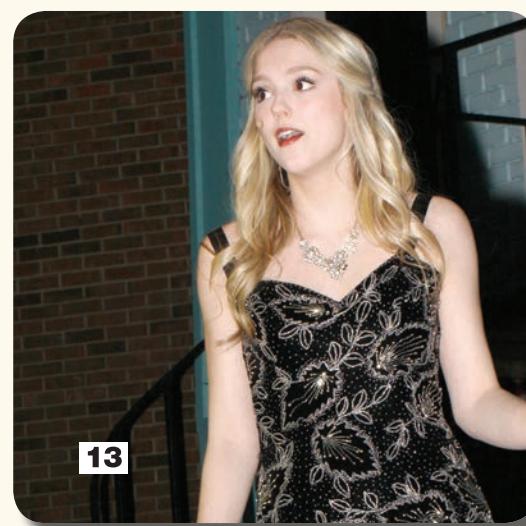
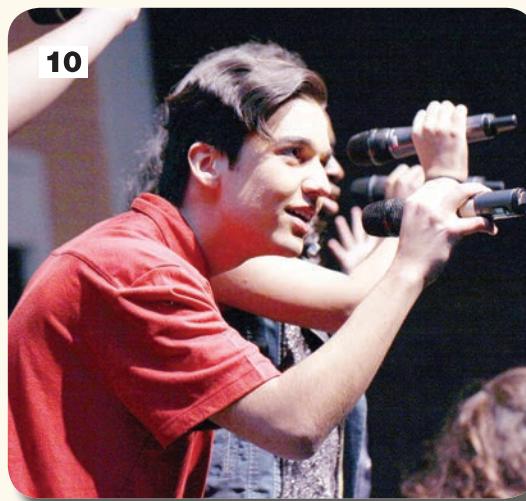
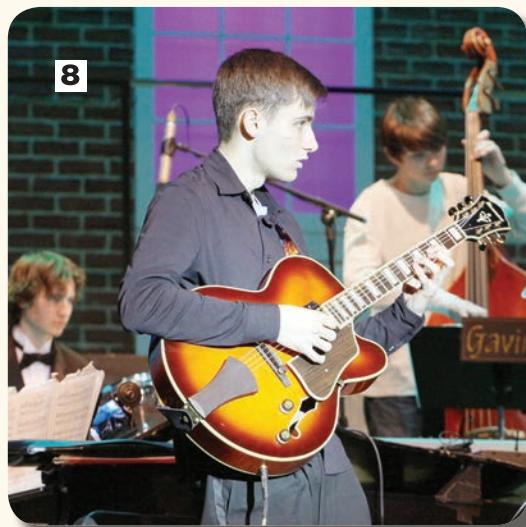
photos by Lisa Brisson



## The Hall High School 59th incarnation of “Pops ‘n Jazz”

The 59th incarnation of the popular Hall High School “Pops ‘n Jazz” production took audience members along on a ride in March to explore the rich musical traditions of New Orleans. A wide array of students in West Hartford public schools, staff and volunteers worked to bring a big helping of The Big Easy to West Hartford for this fun show. The Hall High School Concert Jazz Band, Jazz Band, Choraliers, Jazz Dancers and String Ensemble were aided by the technical crew and production team as well as the Acting Department. This Jazz ‘n Pops show featured the story of a trio of young musicians finding their way in the Crescent City a few days before Mardi Gras. The musical and dance numbers are structured around their story. Student performances from junior artists and the King Philip Singers, KP Sixth Dimension, KP Jazz Band and the Bristow Big Band were also part of the production. In addition, three top guest artists performed with the students on various nights, thanks to the generosity of the Ellen Jeanne Goldfarb Memorial Charitable Trust. Elliot Mason from the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, a singer from the Greater Hartford area named Shenel Johns, and Grammy nominated composer and trumpet player John Daversa all performed.

- 1.** Jazz Dancer senior Sarah Thaxton and sophomore Carly Zykowski warm up before the show. Sarah said she likes the collaborative aspect of this year's show and theme, saying "It's been the most fun because not one person is 'The Star.' Everyone contributes so much." Carly agreed in between stretches, noting all of the groups of dancers, actors, singers and dancers have spent so much time together starting off in their own groups practicing in September and then all working together on the show as one unit starting in January. "It's been a really long process, but it's worth it."
- 2.** Choralier powerhouse Caroline O'Connell leads the "Raise the Roof" number. **3.** Choraliers Cedrick Ekra, Lucia Katz and Thiago Bastos burn up Lin-Manuel Miranda's "96,000." **4.** Concert Jazz Band's Sam Dunlap is a featured trumpet player. **5.** Senior Choralier Ruthie Harrison applies some lipstick before the show. **6.** Jazz Band's Kylee Colbert plays the flute. **7.** Choralier Cedrick Ekra belts out a number. **8.** Jazz Band junior Luc Anis holds the spotlight with his guitar. **9.** Members of the Choraliers perform. **10.** Choralier Thiago Bastos is featured in his second Pops 'n Jazz show. **11.** Acting Teacher Sasha Bratt shows Co-Producer Emmett Drake something on his phone as senior Choralier Kenneth Galm prepares for the show. **12.** Jazz Dancers celebrate all that is Mardi Gras. **13.** Vocal stylist and actress Megan Swindle is featured in her first Pops 'n Jazz show. **14.** "Dance Dance Dance." is a perennial favorite.



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### Teddy

Teddy is a young male, less than 1 year old, and is one of several black cats being passed over for adoption. In other cultures black cats are considered good luck. He is friendly and lovable and looking for a home.

If interested in adopting him, call Animal Friends of Connecticut at 860-827-0381 for more information.



### Charlie

Sweet and energetic, Charlie was found on a wintery night near Rockledge Country Club – underweight, cold and suffering from a skin infection that may have been the result of a food allergy he may have. After a few weeks of medication, food and tender loving care, Charlie is a new dog. He is about 2 years old and 45-50 pounds. He already knows how to sit – especially for a cookie – and will also try to sneak onto your lap for some more attention. Charlie is also very “talkative” and almost has



something to say every time that you try to ignore him. He is friendly and active and would do well with an active, mature family. Other dogs in the household may be fine, but a home with cats is not recommended.

For more information, call Animal Control at 860-570-8818 or send an email to [animalcontrol@westhartfordCT.gov](mailto:animalcontrol@westhartfordCT.gov). **WHL**



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# Living Spaces

Spring Home & Garden

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**Living** *Spaces*

# Picking favorites

Gardeners share special tools

by Mara Dresner  
Staff Writer

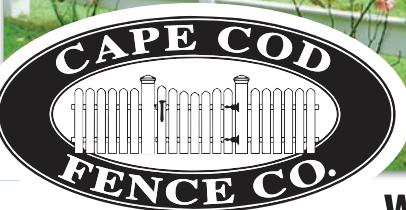
**A**nyone who likes to garden knows that you need some basic tools just to get started.

However, Sarah Bailey of UConn Extension in West Hartford said you don't need a shed full of implements to be successful.

"I can do a substantial amount of my routine gardening tasks with two tools: a trowel and my pruners. I have a variety of trowels in convenient locations, but one pair of pruners travels with me everywhere. I have holes in the back pocket of most of my pants and shorts where the pruners have worn



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# Living Spaces

through," she said.

Bailey, who serves as state extension master gardener coordinator, Hartford County Master gardener coordinator and youth gardening coordinator, finds many uses for the pruners.

"I use them for cutting twine, trimming small branches and non-woody plant material, snipping off diseased or pest-infested plant tips, and plenty of mundane tasks such as opening plastic packaging of plant ties or hose parts. They are a critical element of hose repair, which seems to be an ongoing process," she said.

"There are plenty of very good pruners available, but my longtime partner is a pair of Felco #7 pruners. Along with a well-balanced design that puts your wrist at a comfortable angle, they have a rotating bottom handle that allows you to easily change your grip. When you are doing a lot of pruning at one time, this makes all the difference in how your hand feels at the end of the day. The other great feature is the



**Above:** Brenda Sullivan of Thompson Street Farm in Glastonbury is attached to this masonry trowel, which has been passed down through the generations. **Right:** Cheryl DePrest, founder of the Olga Bobbi line of skincare, jokes that her husband, Channel 3 Chief Meteorologist Bruce DePrest (pictured), is her favorite to work with in the garden. The two have an extensive organic garden.

replaceable blades, especially given the amount of abuse I subject them to. The #7 is a large pair of pruners. I've heard folks with smaller hands complain that they are uncomfortable, but that is the only negative comment I've heard. They are not

cheap, but they last forever. I have had my pair for over 20 years and they're still going strong."

The feel of a tool is important even for someone who grows plants professionally, such as Brenda Sullivan of Thompson Street Farm in Glastonbury.



"Hand garden tools can take on a personal attachment for gardeners with their size, weight and handle type being key individual factors. Even a veteran gardener like myself can become frustrated with an excessively heavy, bulky or otherwise

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**Sarah Bailey of UConn Extension in West Hartford, said you don't need a shed full of implements to be successful. "I can do a substantial amount of my routine gardening tasks with two tools: a trowel and my pruners. I have a variety of trowels in convenient locations, but one pair of pruners travels with me everywhere."**

inefficient tool," she noted.

"Sometimes a gardener must think outside the box and adapt a tool

from someplace else as I did with my most prized garden tool: an old masonry trowel.

"This beautiful tool from the early part of the 20th century was left to me by Uncle Larry who inherited it from his father after he died in the 1930s. To my surprise, the worn handle from decades of use is the perfect size for my hand, and the trowel is well-balanced and not too heavy even after hours of use. This is important because during the growing season, I prepare 50-plus micro-green trays a week so the use of a heavy hand tool fatigues my hand and wrist," she continued. "I also love this trowel for its tapered end that fits perfectly in the corners of the tray allowing for even soil distribution as well as for its efficiency as a transplanting tool in the garden."

Cheryl DePrest of Wethersfield, founder of Olga Bobbi skincare products, also has a favorite in her garden. In her case, however, her favorite is a "who" and not a "what": her husband Bruce DePrest, chief meteorologist at Channel 3.

"Bruce and I love to garden and this is a project that we enjoy together.

We have a perennial garden and an organic herb/vegetable garden every year. Our herb garden is always the same. Parsley, basil, sage, thyme, oregano, tarragon, lemon verbena and rosemary are a must," Cheryl DePrest said. "This year our vegetable garden will consist of many varieties of green beans; a variety of peppers, including habanero, Bruce's favorite; cucumbers; and several kinds of cherry tomatoes – we like them sweet."

They grow everything organically, and Cheryl uses the lemon verbena, rosemary and cucumbers in soaps for her Olga Bobbi line.

While animals took care of most of their strawberries and raspberries last year, they did have an abundance of basil.

"Bruce loves making his yummy marinara sauce with fresh basil and oregano," Cheryl shared. "Last year we had so much basil that I was able to make 10 batches of pesto, some of which we froze for the winter. This is a family favorite." **WHL**

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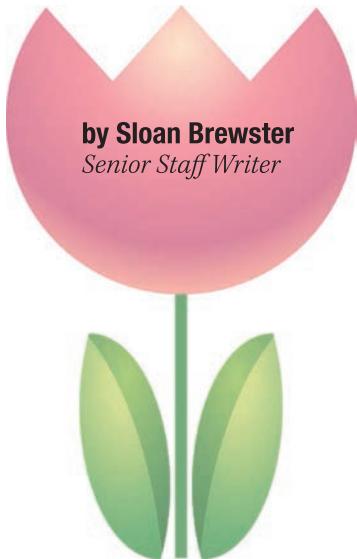
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# Sprucing up town spaces for spring

by Sloan Brewster  
Senior Staff Writer



Elmwood business owners purchased 61 planters for the town of West Hartford last spring.

**A**s spring blooms, local volunteers gear up to plant flowers and beautify their towns.

In most towns, May is the month when blossoms are planted in garden plots throughout town centers and in



containers, such as window boxes and flower pots, adorning walkways and islands on busy streets.

These arrangements, beautiful as they are, do not appear by magic aided by flower fairies. Rather, volunteers from garden clubs and beautifi-

cation organizations take on the tasks of making and caring for the plantings.

The Garden Club of Avon has been doing spring plantings at the Town Hall complex and in the center of town for many, many years, said

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# Living Spaces

Jan Brigham.

"It's one of our biggest projects that we do," she said.

Members of the club's Civic Committee go to the Pickin' Patch where they choose flowers for the window boxes at Town Hall and the garden patches in the complex, Brigham said. There are about four different varieties in each box.

The flowers, which are put in in May just before Memorial Day and removed in October, are changed from year to year.

Last year, they included variegated geraniums, which have different color levels and stand out prettily against the brick walls, said Ann Clark, Civic Committee co-chair. Superbells were also in the mix.

"[They come in] a variety of colors, white, yellow, red, purple," she said. "They go from a deep red to a medium red even into the pink family, and those are really low maintenance and they can sort of droop over the window box."

In the garden plots, they planted

lantana, astilbe and begonias, which are tolerant of the large amounts of shade in the area and don't require a great deal of sunlight.

"We did different colors. We did white, we did yellow and we did red," Clark said.

In past years, they have planted thyme and sweet potato vines, which also vary in color from green to dark red, Clark said. When volunteers pull the plants up, there are actually sweet potatoes in the ground.

At the Memorial Garden on the Town Green, they chose patriotic arrangements.

"We did red, white and blue," Clark said. "Red geraniums, white petunias and blue ageratum."

Flowers are placed so that the tallest ones are in the back and the shortest in the front, with those of mid-height in between the rows of taller and shorter flowers, Brigham said.

The work isn't over when the plants are put in either. For about the next six months, volunteers care for and maintain the plants, making

schedules to water, weed and remove the dead flower heads. How much they do depends on weather conditions

"It all depends. The weather is our big problem," Clark said.

Brigham, who is 84, has been gardening for 50 years and has been in the club since 1981.

"I think it's just being outdoors and watching your flower garden flourish," she said of why she enjoys it.

In Wethersfield, the Wethersfield Beautification Trust has been doing the plantings for more than 20 years, according to Maragaret Sacks, who is known as the Queen of the Gardens.

The trust, which is a registered non-profit, was started in 1996 by Sey and Carol Adil, during plans for a big town celebration, Sacks said. At a Town Council meeting, it was decided that the town should be spruced up during the affair and the Adils took on the task.

Since then the trust has evolved, in part due to a smaller contingency of volunteers.

"As with many of these things, they start out wider and then contract a bit," Sacks said. "It's harder to get volunteers."

Volunteers from the trust plant and maintain 60 cement planters in the historical areas of town in Old Wethersfield and the business district, on the Silus Deane Highway as well as 23 garden plots in parks and other key spots.

Like in Avon, the planters are planted in May and pulled out in October.

Volunteers get together on the third Saturday in May, said Marguerite Alpert, garden club member.

"We call it Plant Distribution Day," she said. "Essentially, we have all the volunteers come and pick up all the plants"

Then they disperse, taking the plants, containers, mulch and whatever else they need for the task ahead.

Alpers creates the designs, assuring that all the plantings look more or less uniform.

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# Living Spaces

They include colorful annuals and perennials and grasses with beautiful seed heads that can survive through the cooler days of spring and fall and the hot months of summer.

"Whatever looks good in the containers," she said. "They have to be plants who pass muster as far as being kind of tough."

Some of the blossoms, which they get from Fair Weather Acres in Rocky Hill, include canna lilies, lantana and trailing portulaca flowers and other flowers that are tolerant of bright sunlit areas.

The gardens are designed by the volunteers that plant them, according to Sacks.

"There's quite a bit of variety depending on the volunteers. Some of them are professional gardeners," she said. "They all look lovely, but they're all quite different."

Last year, Sacks and another volunteer had to make some tweaks to a plot on the island at the intersection of Main and Marsh streets after the town completed some roadwork and

turned the intersection into a four-way stop.

"It impinged on the garden area that we had done for years," Sacks said. "So we went out there on a day in spring and dug out some of the rosebushes."

They replanted the bushes to another spot on the island and took out some plants and put in others.

Alpert joined the trust when she was pregnant with her first son, who is now in college.

"When my kids were very young, that was the civic thing we did," she said of plantings they maintained in Old Wethersfield Village. "We would go there and water and take care of the flowers and make sure everything looked nice."

Last year, Charlie Hilborn, owner of Sheehan-Hilborn-Breen Funeral Home in Elmwood and active member of the Elmwood Business Association, took on the mission of beautifying the neighborhood.

Through KNOX of Hartford, Elmwood business owners purchased

61 planters for the town of West Hartford. According to its website, KNOX was started by Hartford councilwoman Betty Knox in 1966 when she established a trust fund to help improve the city. Now KNOX coordinates a variety of greening programs, including a Community Gardening Program and Blooms Planters.

Blooms Planters is a program to beautify storefronts or businesses with planters.

In Hartford, each year, crews from KNOX prepare 300 planters with flowering annuals and centerpieces for citywide beautification, the website reads. The program is coordinated in partnership with volunteers and the Hartford Business Improvement District.

The program works in conjunction with business owners who pay \$180 per planter, which covers the planter, its upkeep throughout the season and its later removal.

Since the program was such a success last year, Hilborn is planning to do it again this year.

"I've already spoken to the Knox Foundation. They will be very happy to work with us this year," he said. "I'm hoping to get at least 60 out here this year."

KNOX will start its growing season in April, he said on Friday, March 17. Last April, he toured the greenhouse.

"At that point they were gorgeous," he said.

This year, business owners from the Design District New Park Avenue and Bishops Corner areas of town are also planning to work with KNOX to get some planters in their areas, Hilborn said. The Park Road Association also wants to join the effort.

"To quote my phrase, 'Elmwood is blooming,'" he said. "Well, the whole town should be blooming."

KNOX puts the planters in in mid-June and removes them in October, unless business owners want them switched to chrysanthemums, which are maintained through November. **WHL**

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# Seeing green: How to help your lawn bounce back from winter

Lawns are exposed to the elements throughout the year, and each season brings its own unique set of challenges. Summer heat waves can make it hard for lawns to maintain their lush green appeal, while the falling leaves of autumn can threaten root systems if not handled properly. Winter frost and snow also can pose a threat to lawns, leaving homeowners with some work to do when spring arrives.

Spring is a season of revival, and that spirit of rejuvenation extends to lawns. When the last vestiges of winter begin to disappear, homeowners can dust off their gardening gloves and start taking steps to revitalize their lawns for the months ahead.

- Look for signs of damage. Winter can be hard on lawns, so it's important for homeowners to look for signs of damage before they begin planning any springtime landscaping projects. Salt damage can occur in areas that received heavy snowfall over the winter. Many communities use rock salt to de-ice snow- and ice-covered roads, and that rock salt is largely

made up of sodium chloride, which can draw moisture from grass and cause it to brown. Salt trucks used during winter storms often spit salt out onto lawns, so don't be surprised if you notice brown spots on your grass, especially in those areas closest to the road. Winter lawn damage may also be caused by voles, burrowing mouse-like rodents that make paths beneath the snow to hide from predators and feed on grass blades and roots. Lawns with distinctly matted areas may also have been damaged by snow mold that can weaken turf.

- Consult a professional landscaper. Homeowners with considerable experience tending to damaged lawns can no doubt identify and address problems on their own. That's because many problems are a result of the weather, which tends to be similar and produce similar problems from one year to the next. But inexperienced homeowners should consult professional landscapers before attempting to address problems on their own. Winter lawn damage may be caused by a variety of factors that can produce similar symp-

toms, and professional landscapers can identify the culprits behind such damage and provide the most effective solutions to restore the lawn.

- Remove debris. A light raking can help remove any debris that accumulated over the winter. Such debris, which may include fallen branches and fallen leaves left behind from the final days of fall, can prevent lawns from getting the sun and water they need to thrive. Remove this debris, but make sure the grass is not frozen when you do, as walking on frozen grass can cause further damage.

- Let the grass grow. Mowing the lawn is a chore that's reserved for spring, summer and maybe early fall, but it's important that homeowners don't jump the gun and mow too early after winter.

A patient approach allows the grass to reestablish itself, so let it grow a little higher than you normally would before the first cut. When the grass is roughly 4.5 inches high, you can cut it down to three inches and then maintain your normal mowing routine throughout the rest of spring and summer. **WHL**

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# Harmful and helpful insects in the garden

**A**lthough it's virtually impossible to count them, insects are the most diverse group of organisms on the planet. At any given time, it is estimated that there are around 10 quintillion individual insects living. Gardeners grow frustrated when seeing their gardens infested with insects, but gardeners would be wise to learn which insects are hurting their gardens and which can actually help gardens in the long run before eradicating them.

## Harmful

Aphids: These insects suck on the juice needed to sustain plants, partic-

ularly when they congregate.

Bald-faced hornet: Hornets tend to be an aggressive species that can sting repeatedly. Should you find a nest near an entertaining space or garden, it can cause trouble.

Carpenter ants: These ants will burrow into wood causing damage. They may compromise any wooden structure in and around a home.

Locusts: Various species of locust can damage plants and crops due to their voracious appetites.

Treehoppers: These small, green insects mimic the look of leaves, and their appetites can affect crops and gardens.

Red pavement ant: As they feed on

all manner of human food, these ants can quickly overtake areas with their staggering numbers and deliver painful bites.

Grasshoppers: Certain grasshoppers, like the red-legged grasshopper, can decimate food crops and transfer parasites to birds when eaten as prey.

Caterpillars: Many caterpillars, the precursor to adult moths, will feed constantly on leaves, stems and other parts of plants.

## Helpful

Antlion: A foe of ants, they'll help eat and control ant populations and pollinate flowers. They pose no threat to humans, either.

Big dipper firefly: These colorful insects feast on earthworms, slugs and snails during the larval stage.

Garden spiders: Although some spiders can be venomous, many are handy to have around the garden. They'll help control pest populations that can damage plants and crops.

Dragonflies: These aerial artists that zip around the yard are consuming smaller insects that would otherwise pester plants and humans.

Blue-winged wasp: This wasp attacks the larvae of Japanese beetles, helping to control beetle populations.

Bees and butterflies: Butterflies and bees are some of the best pollinators and add whimsy to gardens. **WHL**

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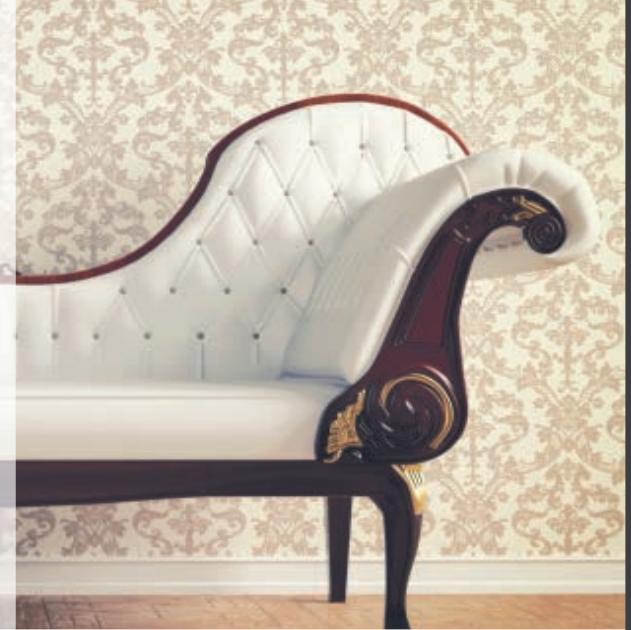
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## How to transform a fixer-upper

Investing in a fixer-upper requires a leap of faith and a vision of what the home can look like in the future. Turning a real estate lemon into lemonade requires certain skills and a good measure of patience.

The real estate market will always have its ups and downs, but real estate is an oft-profitable investment. Real estate investors do their investing for various reasons.

Some see a house as a place to hang their hats for years and years, while others look at properties as nothing more than investments.

Buying a home with the intent to fix it up and resell it is called a "fix and flip."

In such situations, investors buy homes at below-market prices before refurbishing the homes with the goal of recouping their initial investment and then some when the homes are ultimately put back on the market.

Flipping has become popular for

both expert remodelers and novice investors. RealtyTrac, the nation's leading source for comprehensive housing data, noted in its "Year-End and Q4 2015 U.S. Home Flipping" report that 5.5 percent of all single-family home and condo sales during the year were flipped properties. This marked an increase from the same time the previous year.

Investing in a fixer-upper requires a leap of faith and a vision of what the home can look like in the future. Turning a real estate lemon into lemonade requires certain skills and a good measure of patience. The following are some guidelines to get anyone started.

- Don't bite off more than you can chew. Make an honest assessment of

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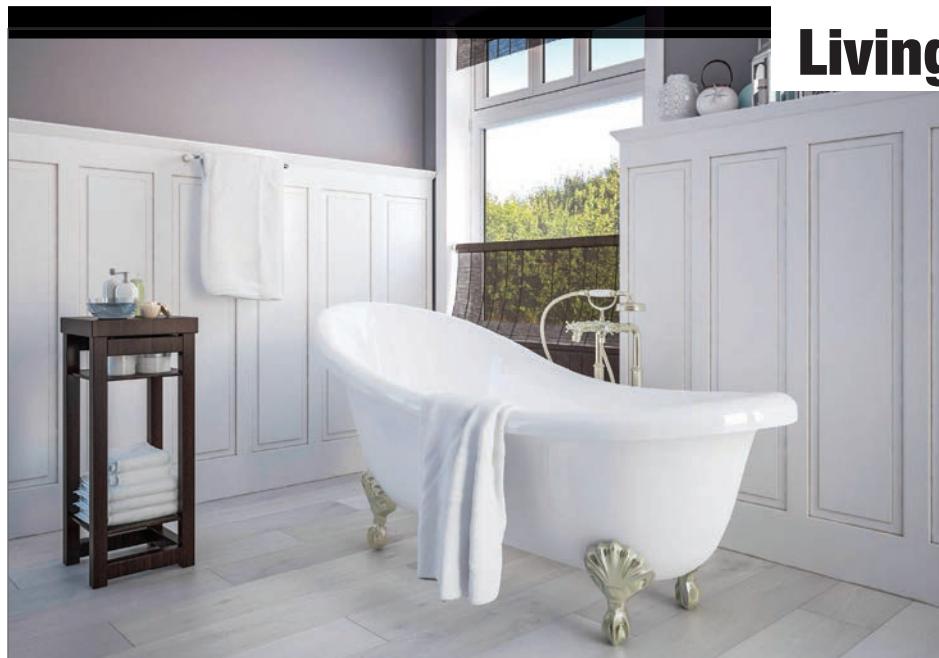
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## Living Spaces

**Renovate with an eye toward prospective buyers' needs. Keep things neutral and accommodating. Research the latest trends to understand what buyers might be seeking in a home.**

your abilities and which renovations, if any, you can handle. If you are unskilled or inexperienced working with your hands, then it can be easy for an investment property to quickly become a money pit. Before purchasing a property, hire a trained home inspector to tour the home with you and point out all of the areas that will need renovation. With this list, begin getting estimates on how much money the work will entail. Determine if this fits with your bud-

get or not. You do not want to invest so much that it exceeds what you could feasibly recoup when it comes time to sell.

- Overlook cosmetic things when visiting properties. Cosmetic issues include all of the easily replaceable items in a home, such as carpeting, appliances, interior paint colors and cabinetry. Focus on the bones of the house — the architectural integrity and those little touches that you envision having a "wow" factor.



**in some instances, a coat of paint and some new accents may be all you need to transform a space. For example, if kitchen cabinets are in good condition, see if they can be refaced or painted instead of replaced entirely.**

- Seek the help of experts. Some flippers think they'll save the most money by doing all of the work themselves. This isn't always the case. Professional architects, designers and contractors may help you save money. Contractors have an intimate knowledge of where to buy materials and may be able to negotiate prices based on wholesale or trade costs. In addition, experts can help you avoid common pitfalls because they've already done this

type of work time and again. It's smart to rely on expert advice, even if it means investing a little bit more.

- Save money by doing some work yourself. While the pros may tackle the more complex parts of a given project, such as rewiring electricity or changing the footprint of a home, you can still be involved.

Ask to participate in demolition, such as taking down walls or removing old materials from the home. Such participation may be fun, and it

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# Living Spaces

can save you substantial amounts of money on labor.

- Recognize that not everything must be completely redone. Realize that, in some instances, a coat of paint and some new accents may be all you need to transform a space. For example, if kitchen cabinets are in good condition, see if they can be refaced or painted instead of replaced entirely. Install new door pulls/handles to add visual interest. Look for some ready-made items, such as bookshelves, instead of installing custom carpentry.

- Think about what the buyer wants and not what you want. Renovate with an eye toward prospective buyers' needs. Keep things neutral and accommodating. Research the latest trends to understand what buyers might be seeking in a home.

You want potential buyers to envision themselves moving right in.

Renovating a fixer-upper takes time, but it can be a worthwhile project, and one that can help anyone turn a profit in a booming real estate market. **WHL**



Overlook cosmetic things when visiting properties, such as carpeting, appliances, interior paint colors and cabinetry. Focus on the bones of the house — the architectural integrity and those little touches that you envision having a "wow" factor.

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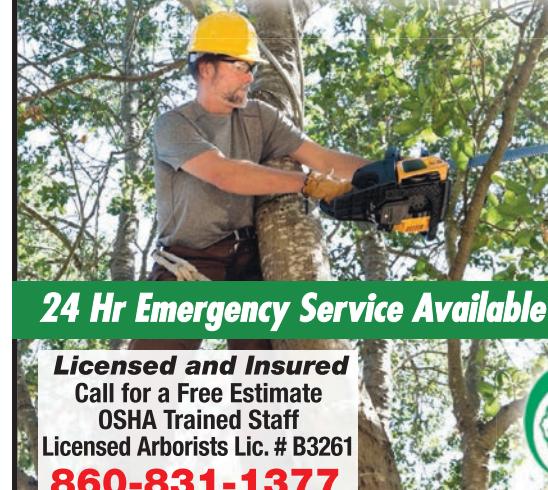
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While the color white is always trendy, the paint manufacturers Benjamin Moore chose white (Simply White OC-117) as its "it" color for 2016. White can be used nearly anywhere inside and outside

the home. Improving interior and exterior spaces with white elements is easier than you might think, and it instantly can make anything look as good as new.

## Kitchen

While rich cherrywood cabinets and deeply hued granite countertops have long been popular in kitchens, creamy white cabinets paired with blonde wood countertops can work together to make kitchens seem open and airy. If all white is not your thing, brighten up kitchen spaces

with white canisters, cookie jars and a fresh bouquet of white flowers to add instant appeal.

## Living Room

Use white as a base color for living room spaces so you can build on it with other hues on pillows and draperies, mixing and matching however you see fit.

Homeowners who have children and/or pets should look for furniture with removable slipcovers. This way they're easily removed and laundered.

## Bathroom

White bathrooms look fresh and are easy to clean and maintain. White tiles provide a classic look. Include colored bath mats, towels and shower curtains to break up the white as you see fit. A neutral white base makes it easy to switch out color schemes whenever you feel like it.

## Bedroom

Feminine and fresh, white bedrooms may not be the first choice for novice designers. If the prospect of

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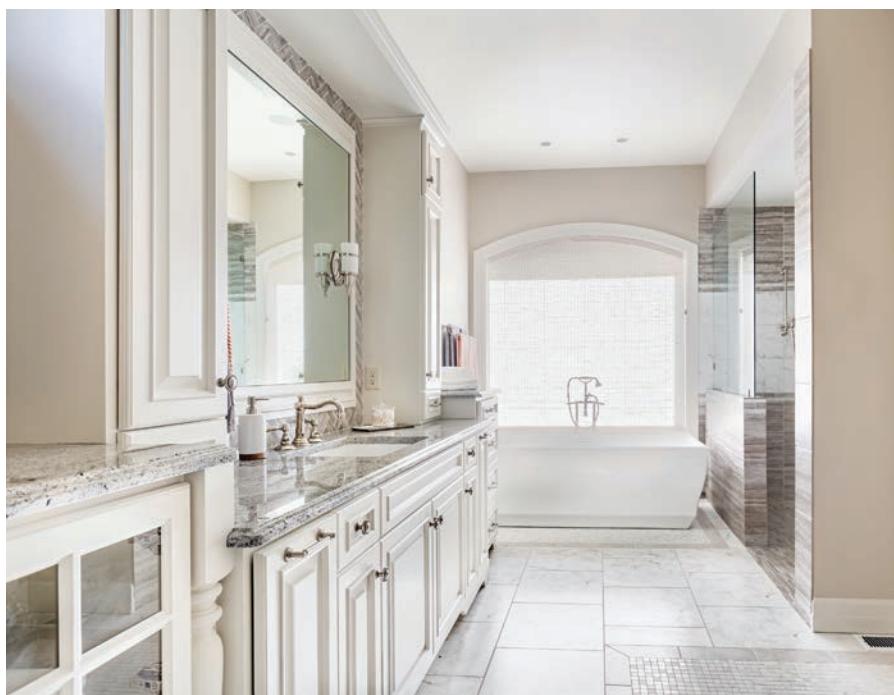
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# Living Spaces



white on white seems too sterile, offset deeper hues on bed linens and walls with white furniture. This provides some pop against the darker contrast.

Keep in mind that doing a bed up in all white means it will always be easy to find matching sheets and pillowcases, making it possible to

ensure everything looks cohesive and crisp.

## Outdoors

Use white paint on trims, shutters, mailboxes and more to provide that pop of contrast against the rest of the home.

White complements just about



White is a versatile color to use around the home. It's consistently a favorite among designers for its crisp appeal.

every color, making it a versatile choice on a home's accents regardless of the main exterior color of that home.

White and other light shades will reflect the sun as well, contributing to cooler temperatures on walkways, decks and other structures, which can be advantageous to homeowners who live

in warm climates.

Is it any wonder that white continues to be a classic and popular color to use around the home?

Whether you do so with monochromatic roomscapes or accent pieces, you can incorporate white into design plans throughout your home. **WHL**

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## Writer's block

### Whining while I wait

by Lynn Woike  
*Editor*

**I**'ve noticed this past week that I've been forced to do a lot of waiting. It's not something I'm good at. When I complained to a friend that two people had not replied to emails I had sent the previous evening, she said I reminded her of the businesswoman in the Vicks ZzzQuil commercial. She is sitting at a desk at the foot of her employee's bed, saying, "I just sent you an email. Can you respond before you wake up?"

I hadn't seen the commercial, but I am sure if I did, I wouldn't have recognized myself.

Just like I don't recognize myself sometimes when I'm stuck in traffic. Rush hour traffic. Rush hour traffic on I-84 when there's a vehicle on the side of the road with a police car with flashing lights behind it. Last weekend I was rushing to pick up someone who was supposed to have picked me up, but had turned off the alarm and didn't wake up until I called ... five minutes after we were supposed to have been on our way to pick up two more people.

It does no good to get angry at bumper-to-bumper traffic, even when it has to stop to check out the flashing lights. It does no good to get angry at the driver weaving in and out or the one who took an exit lane all the way up to the exit before forcing his way back into through traffic. But sometimes I do. I will be singing along to music that puts me in a zen frame of mind when suddenly I hear myself yelling, "What the {#/@%&< are you doing you <\*~(#+@?)" Then I have to remind myself getting frustrated only makes it worse, and try to continue singing.

While I can wait in traffic, lines or queues, it's my attitude while doing so that matters. My problem is typically when I need patience, I need it immediately.

Who was it anyway who decided patience a virtue? Why couldn't faster be a virtue?

It would sure be nice at the DMV, where I gave up almost three hours of my Saturday, standing in line only to be given a phone number to be called the next business day. I realize all that time was a gift from the universe, giving me the opportunity to practice patience.

It didn't work. I wasted the time shifting from one foot to another,

leaning against the wall, deleting texts from my phone and talking to the person in front of me about everything from hot dogs to eBay. I watched the clock move a lot faster than the line to the elevator, then the line to get a ticket, then the masses waiting to be called.

Also this week were the three quests for customer service from two institutions concerning one transaction. I stood in line at one of them to get help with the problem, and then jumped through hoops to get the customer service number of the other, only to twice be forced to navigate a menu maze and get placed on hold to get to a human who then just reiterated the incorrect series of events, insisting everything was right. I think the reason I may have been so impatient was because I was trying to refund an overpayment.

This rash of recent events reminded me that people are expected to become more patient with age. I mean we are supposed to be getting wiser as we get older, and being patient would certainly be wiser. Older adults may appear to be more patient, but I think actually they're just tired, run down, perhaps in pain and spiritless. They've resigned themselves to having to wait.

I doubt a lack of energy on my part would ever be confused with patience.

Being old enough to collect Social Security and still not having found patience is frustrating. Yet, being frustrated with myself for not learning patience even after all these decades rather defeats the purpose and therein is the place I have been stuck.

It takes time to figure out why I am in such a rush so much of the time and what triggers cause me to lose my cool. If I could complete that self-evaluation, I might be able to find ways to stop fidgeting, stop pressing and start feeling comfortable outside my speed zone.

I am sure I will keep getting opportunities to practice patience, and I expect them to be about as unproductive as this past week has been.

All in good time? They say that good things come to those who wait, but I'm not patient enough to wait for a witty ending to this column to present itself. This will have to do.

The end. **WHL**

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BY MARK DIXON  
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]



## A Warm, Snowy winter...

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At Bridgeport (another official recording station in Connecticut), January went down as the warmest on record at 6.8° above normal. It was then followed by one of the warmest Februarys, the 28 days averaged 6.0° above normal.

During the course of the season, Windsor Locks had 8.71" of precipitation (rain, plus the water equivalent of snow, sleet and ice),

this was 0.85" below average. Total snowfall was 41.2", an impressive 10.5" above average (a daily snowfall record was set on February 9th, with Blizzard Chris - 15.5" was received, breaking the prior record of 13.0" from 1969).

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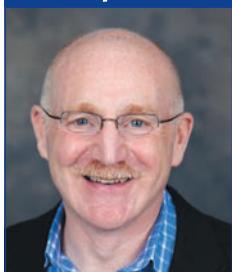
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